FATHER TIM'S TALKS

McENNIRY

VOLUME TWO

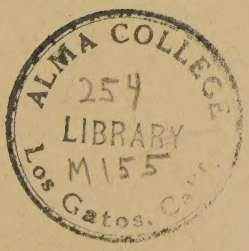
FATHER TIM'S TALKS

WITH PEOPLE HE MET

BY

C. D. McENNIRY, C. SS. R.

VOLUME II



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Courtship	1
The Unbeliever's Act of Faith	10
The Supreme Evil	19
The Ear-marks of the Beast	27
Among the Ministers' Wives	35
The Midnight Special	44
At the Polls	53
A Blowout	62
Why He Says the Breviary	71
"Sin No More"	78
Hell	88
A Buttonhole Too Many.	99
Holy Water and a Deaconess	108
A Judge Needs Jurisdiction	116
Biddy Brady's Waterloo	126
The Horrors of the Confessional	134
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	141
A Hint to Parents	151

FATHER TIM'S TALKS

COURTSHIP

"Well, I don't care; Stanislaus is all right even if he is my fellow!" cried Hilda Lozowski.

"But he has such long, funny ears," teased Bridget Kilgallon. "Don't they flap when it's windy?"

Kindhearted Katie Kleist felt that it was time to take sides with poor, persecuted Hilda; but she only succeeded in directing that young lady's rapid fire anger upon her own innocent head by saying:

"Ah, Bridget, you know they're not *that* long."

"You're jealous, Katie Kleist, because you can't get a fellow yourself; that's what's the matter with you!" Hilda blurted out.

"Come, come children! What kind of talk is this!" interposed Sister Gerarda, dropping unconsciously into the very expression she so often used, five years ago, when Hilda, Katie, and Bridget were the most industrious but most irrepressible of her "Eighth Grade Girls." The kindness, firmness, and tact, with which Sister Gerarda had directed them while they were pupils in her room, had done much toward making them what they were to-day — Christian young women of sterling worth. Yet it was in no wise on account of a sense of duty or gratitude, but out of sheer love for her ennobling companionship that the girls came so often, as on this Sunday after-

noon, to pay her a short visit in the convent parlor. Neither did she always stop them, when they sought to make her a confidante in their "affairs of the heart." She told herself that, if she hoped to direct them during this critical period in their life, she must keep their confidence. And besides — well, we all know that the female heart loves matchmaking, and, even under the sombre veil of the sisterhood, a woman is a woman still. However the good sister's conscience told her that this was going too far for a talk in the convent parlor.

"Come, come, children! You with your 'fellows' — don't you know it's wrong!"

At that moment Hilda caught sight of the pastor passing through the vestibule on his way to the chapel to give Benediction for the Sisters.

"Father Casey, Father Casey!" Then as he entered the room: "Father, isn't it right to have fellows? Sister Gerarda says it isn't."

"Like grippe or the measles," said Father Casey, "it all depends on how bad you have them."

"Ah, Father, please be serious, we want to know. Every once in a while we hear the priest in a sermon knocking company keeping. Is it wrong?"

Father Casey consulted his watch, found that it was ten minutes before Benediction time, and accordingly sat down, while Hilda, Katie, and Bridget gathered round full of eager questions, just as they used to do at school five years ago. Sister Gerarda stood a little apart in the old way, happy to see her charges in good hands, and confident that they were going to hear something that was for their good.

"Company keeping," he said, and the bantering smile on his lips gave way to a look of pain and sor-

row as he remembered the numerous cases where he had known this form of amusement to be the occasion of ruin to innocent souls and of grave offence to Almighty God; "Company keeping is sometimes necessary, sometimes unnecessary, often wrong, and always dangerous." He paused a moment and the three girls all spoke at once. Katie's question was: When is it necessary? Bridget's: When is it unnecessary? And Hilda's: When is it wrong?

"One at a time," said Father Casey. "To prove my neutrality, I shall begin by answering a question which none of you asked: Why is company keeping dangerous? Company keeping is dangerous because human beings are human beings. And since they are human beings, they have the unfortunate power of committing sin, offending God, and losing their souls. Whatever is likely to lead a person into sin of any kind is dangerous. Whatever is likely to lead a person into sin against the angelic virtue of purity is more dangerous than anything else."

"Father, why?" ventured Hilda.

"Because, child, it is harder to pass through such dangers unscathed. St. Alphonsus Liguori, after his lifelong experience as confessor and missionary, does not hesitate to say that ninety-nine per cent of those who are damned are damned on account of this sin, and since this is the case, it follows that temptations to this sin are ninety-nine times more dangerous than all other temptations put together. And every one should know that a young man and a young woman cannot go on for months and even years meeting each other continually in the intimate relations of close courtship, as it is generally carried on in this country, without its proving a source of temptation for either

or both of them. That is why close company keeping is practically always dangerous."

"But if they were both good Catholics, then there wouldn't be any danger, would there, Father?" suggested Hilda.

"Even if they were both archangels there would still be danger. Lucifer was an archangel yet he fell into sin."

"Then, no matter who the young man is, close company keeping is always wrong?" queried Bridget with alarm.

"Did I say that?" asked the priest.

"Yes, Father," answered the impulsive Bridget.

"You said," interposed the more philosophical Katie, "that it is always *dangerous,* and I suppose that means that it is always wrong."

"Your supposition is a mistake, Miss Katie," said Father Casey. "All depends upon whether the danger is necessary or unnecessary. If the danger of sin is unnecessary, it is always wrong to go into it. If the danger of sin is necessary, then it is not wrong to go into it, provided — remember this well — provided you take the proper precautions to lessen the danger."

"Father, when is company keeping unnecessary?" asked Bridget.

"That is the question you asked a while ago, Bridget. It was out of order then; now it is strictly in order. Close company keeping is unnecessary whenever it is not carried on in view of a future marriage, that is to say, in view of a marriage which both parties are able and willing to contract within a reasonably short time, provided they find each other congenial."

"Then it's wrong to keep close company just for fun?" asked Bridget.

"It certainly is," said Father Casey, "quite the same as it is wrong to go into any other danger of sin just for fun."

"That's hard," said Katie.

"It just seems as though the Church didn't want us to do anything but stick at home and suck our thumbs!" moaned Bridget.

"I know lots of good Catholic girls that keep close company just for fun," pouted rebellious Hilda.

"Ah, Hilda, you still have that temper of yours in spite of all the wholesome advice Sister Gerarda used to give you when you were in the eighth grade. Come now, own up that you spoke a little too hastily. You know lots of Catholic girls that keep close company just for fun, but whether or not they are *good* Catholic girls is something you don't know. I will even grant that you know lots of good Catholic girls that are keeping company; but how can you say whether or not they are doing so with a view to marriage? Do you think they are going to come and tell you? If there are girls who are really good, and who are keeping company just for fun, it is because they don't know any better. The day may come when they will say, in bitterness of heart: 'Would to God that some one had told us that it was wrong, so that we could have stopped in time!' And don't say, Bridget, that the Church wants you to stick at home and suck your thumb. It is not the Church's law, but the law of nature that forbids imprudent company keeping. Besides you can find better employment for your thumb at home than sucking it. You can use your thumb and your whole hand in working for the mother and

father that labored and suffered so unselfishly for you all these years, and in making the home pleasant for your brothers and sisters. They have a thousand times more claims on your affection and your company, and will repay you a thousand times better, than the young fellow that wants to run around with you without any intention of marriage. Life is not made up of fun. It is a most serious matter, as every one learns before spending many years in this valley of tears, and as none learn more quickly than they who look only for fun. You girls are proud to call yourselves Children of Mary. Was her life nothing but fun? You claim the name of Christian, or follower of Christ. Was His life nothing but fun? Make the ruling object of your life, duty, and not fun, and I assure you that you will find that it is the golden key to the palace of true happiness."

"Oughtn't a good Catholic girl go to any dances or parties or shows or — or — anything?" cried Bridget, now almost in tears at the serious turn the conversation had taken.

"Provided the parties and so forth are proper, and she behaves properly while she is there and while she is going and coming home, a *moderate* indulgence in these pleasures is not forbidden to a good Catholic girl. And you young ladies know very well that a moderate indulgence in these pleasures is possible without entering upon the intimate relations of a close courtship with a young man whom you have no thought of marrying."

"Father," said Hilda humbly, "you said a while ago that close company keeping is sometimes allowed. Would you please tell us when that is?"

"Close company keeping, I said, is allowed when-

ever it is necessary, provided the proper precautions are taken to lessen the danger."

"When is it necessary?"

"When it is done, as you might easily deduce from what I said a few moments ago, with a view to a proximate marriage. I asked the children in Sister Rose's room one day: 'What is the proper preparation for marriage?' and Kathleen Burke said: 'A little courting, your Reverence.' Kathleen was right. When a couple get married they must stay married until death. Therefore it is no more than right that they should have a chance to know each other well before entering upon this life-long contract, in order to see whether they will be able to live happily together. In order to know each other well, a moderate courtship is generally necessary."

"Father, you said that even when company keeping is necessary, they must take the proper precautions to lessen the danger. What do you mean by that?"

"The proper precautions are these: First, they should not, as a rule, live under the same roof. For then the danger would be too great. Secondly, they should have the consent of their parents. True, it is you and not your parents, that must live with your future husband, and therefore it is you, and not your parents, that should make the choice. However, remember that your parents have tried married life. How much better it is for you to learn from their disinterested advice rather than from your own bitter experience! If they are opposed to a certain young man, they generally have the best reasons for their opposition. Hence it is, as a rule, sinful to keep close company without their consent. This would lead to secret meetings, full of danger even for a saint. And

this brings me to the third precaution. The young man and young woman should avoid being together too long or too often, and, above all, when there is no one else about, whether it is on lonely walks or drives or even in the parlor after the rest of the family have gone to bed. Such meetings are dangerous, and they are not at all necessary. The only lawful object of company keeping is to enable the couple to learn whether they can hope to live happily together as man and wife. Now the proper place to learn this, is not drifting over moonlit waves in a canoe, nor holding interminable tête-a-têtes on rustic benches in the park. It concerns each little how the other acts in such circumstances. That is not what they will be doing after marriarge. After marriage they will be living together in a home with a family. The best way for each to see whether the other will be a pleasant companion for family life is for them to meet in the family circle. It is hard to understand how any conscientious mother or self-respecting daughter can countenance the long, lonely meetings, so shamefully common during courtship in this country. You girls would be surprised to know that many of the married women in your acquaintance are going through life with bitter disappointed hearts. This is, in a great measure, due to the fact that, by an improper courtship, they lost, instead of confirming, their husband's love and esteem, and brought down God's curse instead of His blessing upon their marriage. Fourthly, every pure Christian maiden will be firm — firm as a rock — in repelling every improper liberty. Were she to act otherwise, she would only despise herself, offend her God, make herself cheap and common in the estimation of the young man, and become a stumbling

block to him on the way of virtue and manhood. But of course it is superfluous even to mention this to respectable girls. Lastly, you must pray with unusual earnestness and receive the sacraments frequently and devoutly. If there is one time more than another when you are determining whether you are to be happy or miserable in this life and in the next, it is during courtship. And therefore, if there is one time more than another when you need God's help, which is to be obtained through prayer and the sacraments, it is then. After you have decided that you can be happy together and become engaged, from that moment — "

The convent bell rang for Benediction.

" Some other time, girls "; and Father Casey hurried away to the sacristy to vest.

When Sister Gerarda took her place in chapel and opened her prayer book, she heaved a sigh.

" It seems hard," she soliloquized, " for young girls to be good nowadays. What a pity Hilda and Katie and Bridget didn't take the veil! "

THE UNBELIEVER'S ACT OF FAITH

A small group of students, who were returning home by devious paths and easy stages from a great non-sectarian university, sat on the upper deck of the lake steamer, *Nyack,* enjoying their cigarettes and watching the lights of Milwaukee slip down behind the horizon.

There is a certain element of boding uncertainty — uncanniness — in quitting the shore at night and pushing out swiftly into the black waters. Even the young university men felt it. There was a momentary pause in their incoherent, slang-flavored chatter. From the open window of a nearby state room there broke upon the stillness the clear tones of a childish voice. The child was evidently reciting night prayers at its mother's knee, for it said:

"Act of Faith. O my God! I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe that Thy divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them who canst neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen."

"Angelic sweet!" murmured a youth with silky hair that stood in sore need of the barber.

"The deuce it is!" growled a high browed youth who posed so persistently as a philosopher at the university that he had, to his own infinite delight, secured

the nickname, Plato. "How can anything be angelic when there is no such thing in creation as an angel! And how can anything be sweet that is ignorant, unjust, and tyrannical!"

"Put on the soft pedal, Plato!" cried one. "You're mixed; you think you are on the grand stand, roasting the umpire."

"Kindly elucidate further," added another, "how that little innocent in the state room, with his nightie on, saying his prayers, happens to be a tyrant and a — a — what-do-you-call-em."

"It's not the poor kid that's unjust and tyrannical," said Plato, "but the mediæval organization that distorts the child's mind with such superstitious rot."

"Cheese it, Plato," whispered a companion, jabbing a sharp elbow into the interstices between the philosopher's ribs, "the gent in the long-tailed coat, leaning on the rail, is a 'sky pilot.'"

Plato evidently did not share his companion's delicacy about hurting the sensibilities of the "gent in the long-tailed coat," for he raised his voice in order to be more surely heard above the throbbing of the engines and continued:

"I say it is unjust and tyrannical to handicap a helpless child by saturating him with Jesuitical fables which he must later on work out of his system before he can even begin his real education. It is like making a poor kid develop bow legs who will have to earn his living as a shortstop."

This brilliant witticism was received with a half-hearted laugh by a few of the students and a loud guffaw from Ambrose Gallen. Gallen was a Catholic who had apostatized after his entrance into the university and, quite naturally, felt called upon to demon-

strate upon every possible occasion that not a shred of the rags of Popery still clung to him; hence his guffaw.

The "sky pilot," who had been leaning against the rail, turned towards Plato. It was Father Casey. Now every sensible man knows that a semi-public religious discussion on the deck of a passenger steamer is calculated to do little good, therefore we must, in charity to the good priest, presume that he had no intention of "Starting anything" when he looked at Plato and said quietly:

"*I* thought the child's act of faith was reasonable and uplifting. Don't you yourself sometimes make acts of faith?"

"Not on your life, old man. I have dug down and examined the philosophical foundations of all your acts of faith, and the result is that I have quit making such things. I'm a first-class unbeliever — a steel-plated, high power, heavy armed unbeliever, that's what I am. Ha, I presume you gentlemen of the cloth would corral me with the goats on the left, wouldn't you?"

"Never," declared Father Casey, "would we be so cruel! You are too young and inexperienced; the goats might bite you! As for acts of faith, do you know, boys," he continued, addressing the entire group, "that the unbeliever makes ten times as many acts of faith as the believer?"

Plato, who had intended to resort to language sufficiently coarse to put a stop to the priest's interference, now felt that his prestige as a philosopher among his fellows was in serious danger, and he determined to take up the gauntlet.

"I would be infinitely obliged to you, sir, if you would prove that. Prove for example that I make

more acts of faith than you do, and I'll admit that I'm beaten."

"A fair offer!" said Father Casey. "I accept it most willingly provided that you will answer all my fair questions, and thus give us power to judge what acts of faith you really do make."

"Fire away; you'll find me there with the answer, don't you worry!"

"Do you believe in the Catholic Church?"

"Hardly!" sneered the philosopher.

"Still you know history, past and current. You know that countless multitudes during the past two thousand years have believed, and that there are three hundred and one million now living who believe, that the Catholic Church is the one true Church founded by God to bring all men to heaven. Now you, without any convincing reason, perhaps, without even being sure what the Catholic Church teaches, hold that all these people are either hypocrites, professing doctrines they know to be false, dupes, accepting doctrines that are unreasonable. Therefore, right here, you are making quite a remarkable act of faith. Let us go a step further: Do you believe in the existence of an immortal soul?"

"I do not; I have assisted at five hundred operations in the clinic. I have examined every fibre of the living human body, and I have never seen so much as a single trace of the soul. I can't believe that there is such a thing as an immortal soul when I am convinced from my own personal observation that there isn't."

"You don't believe that there is such a thing as an *invisible* soul because you have never *seen* it! That is very like saying that you don't believe the thermometer

has dropped below zero because you can't feel the heat."

"I don't believe in the existence of an immortal soul because there was never yet a valid argument advanced in its favor."

"Let me call to your mind one of the many valid arguments that have been advanced in its favor. Here it is. Man has the power of reasoning, a power absolutely beyond the reach of the brute. That is to say, he can conceive and develop such abstract ideas as moral right and moral wrong, cause and effect, time, space, immortality, and so forth. He has the power of willing. That is, he can determine what he will believe and what he will do, independently of, and even in contradiction to, his physical inclinations, desires and impressions. All this shows that there must exist within man an immaterial entity independent from, and superior to, his bodily being. But it is clear that an immaterial entity, superior to, and independent of corporeal things, cannot be altered or destroyed by the change of death of any corporeal thing. To this immaterial entity we give the name, soul; and to its quality of indestructibility we give the name, immortality."

"And to the whole argument," cried Plato, "I give the name, bosh! The reasoning and willing which you say must come from an immortal soul, is in reality nothing else than the result of chemical combinations in the brain."

"And whence, may I ask," said the priest, "whence come the chemicals that combine to produce these effects?"

"Why, naturally," said the philosopher, "from the nourishment that the body has assimilated."

"Then," said the priest, "you believe that all your

profound thoughts, all your lofty aspirations, are but another form of the beef-steak and potatoes you consumed for breakfast. Verily, a sublime act of faith!"

"Don't mind him, Father; he is only giving a bad recitation of Prof. Binkley's infidel lectures on biology."

This unexpected ally was a harumscarum student sitting astride the rail and driving several nervous women to the verge of hysterics by his imminent danger of falling overboard. This youth no doubt had a civilized name of some kind, but none of his companions seemed to know it, for they always and everywhere called him, "Packey." Packey was a Catholic. True, at least since his entrance into the university, he lost little time in the practice of his religion, but he had inherited enough of the bellicose spirit to be ready at all times to fight for it.

"At any rate," growled Plato, glaring at the unabashed Packey, "Professor Binkley takes up science with a mind clear and unhampered by any of the musty doctrines to which your priests must blindly assent."

"And so," said the priest, "it seems that you believe Professor Binkley when he rejects the research of ages and tries with his little mind to build up a new doctrine to take the place of the universal belief in the existence of an immortal soul. You base your belief on the mere assertion in such a momentous matter, while you would consider his unsupported word altogether insufficient if there were question of settling an affair wherein you had even a few dollars at stake. Here again you are making a very decided act of faith. But I must ask you still another question before we can see how many acts of faith are made by the unbeliever. Do you believe in the divinity of Christ?"

"No, sir," replied Plato, "I have investigated the matter and found that it is a doctrine based on a misconception from the beginning."

"Then you believe that you are smarter and brighter than any of the millions of men who have believed in and defended the divinity of Christ during every period of the last two thousand years. That, it seems to me, is an act of faith of no mean proportions in your own intellectual excellence."

"Some act of faith, believe me!" interjected the exasperating Packey, "especially in a gink that was plucked at the last exam!"

"Now," said the priest, "for a final question. Surely, you believe at least in the existence of a Being of infinite intelligence, spiritual, indivisible, unchangeable, self-existent, all-present, all-powerful, who planned, made, preserves, and directs the universe and all that it contains — the Being whom we call God!"

"No, I do not!" snarled Plato, who was growing heartily disgusted with this one-sided controversy.

"Then, indeed," said Father Casey, "in order to account for the visible world around you, you must make enough acts of faith to fill a prayer book. You must make an act of faith that this perishable world made itself, that is, did something before it had begun to exist. You must make an act of faith that the wonderful harmony of the universe with its millions of worlds, each moving in its appointed track, is the result of accident, that the laws of nature, which fill with awe and admiration the heart of the true scientist, merely 'happened' without any intelligent power to call them into being. You must make an act of faith that the belief in a supreme Being which comes to every man with the dawn of reason, is a groundless decep-

tion. And after all your acts of faith, you must admit that you have accounted for nothing. How much more reasonable is that one simple act of faith made by the little boy in his state room a few moments ago. It is based on unimpeachable evidence, and it furnishes a satisfactory answer to every question the human mind can propose! He professed his belief in God, and the things that we see tell us plainly that there must be a God, or these things could not have begun to exist, while the act of faith you make, when you try to account for the existence of visible things, sounds so foolish that you are ashamed to formulate it. He professed his belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and if there is any fact that is, more than another, clear from history and tradition, it is this one. You deny the divinity of Christ. You advance a new method of historical research to disprove the unimpeachable evidence in its favor. Your vaunted system of historical research is so artificial, so unreliable, that were you to apply it to a ball game or a prize fight, the result would be too ridiculous for publication, but because it is used in overthrowing the belief of centuries in a saving and consoling doctrine, it must forsooth be praised as a triumph of genius. That child's act of faith professed belief in all that the Catholic Church teaches, because Jesus Christ has made the Catholic Church His mouthpiece, and Jesus Christ cannot lie. Your act of faith professes belief in a ranting professor or a rabid book for no better reason than because they pander to your pride of intellect and break down time honored barriers to the gratification of your passions."

"When Plato turns in to-night, fellows," broke in Packey, "don't fail to hover near his window to hear

him lisp his act of faith. You'll recognize the window by the light from his halo."

"Gentlemen," continued Father Casey, "you have heard the believer's act of faith. That litle child recited it a few moments ago. Now listen to the act of faith made by the unbeliever, and compare the two. 'Act of Faith. O my adored Self! I firmly believe that I know everything, and that the rest of men living and dead are hypocrites or dupes. I believe that any statement I make must be true simply because I make it. I believe that I never need offer any other refutation of the unanswerable arguments of men, who studied and thought a hundred times more than I, except to say that their reasoning is mediæval — smacks of the schools. I firmly believe that the human race merits pity that it wallowed in ignorance and superstition until the dazzling splendor of my brilliant intellect broke upon the darkened world. I believe, though I have no solid reason for my belief, that there is no God and no soul, I believe that the universe made itself and preserves its well regulated existence without any intelligent Being to plan or direct it. I believe that my honored ancestor was a long tailed ape or a missing link, and that all that I can hope for for the future, is death and complete annihilation. So I believe, and so I will ever believe — at least until such time as I shall find myself in imminent danger of death, then I shall most likely cringe for mercy before the God whom, all along, I knew in my heart to exist. Amen."

"Angelic sweet!" mockingly murmured he of the untonsored poll.

"Plato, my boy," cried Packey, sliding down from the rail, "it's you for the hatches!"

THE SUPREME EVIL

As an unusually strong gust of the "Norther" raging without shook the house from foundation to roof and fanned the log fire into a fierce blaze, the two men drew their chairs nearer to the massive bronze fireplace and silently watched the smoke from their cigars writhing and twisting until it was caught by the draft and sucked up the wide flue.

One was Bart Killalee, a rich broker, who had retired from active life to enjoy his wealth in the solitude of his country mansion. The other was Father Tim Casey, who, on returning from a distant sick call, had been caught by the blizzard and the darkness and urged to accept the broker's hospitality. The good priest, ever on the alert to gain a soul for God and heaven, had accepted gladly, for Bart Killalee was one of those whom the neighbors describe, with a shrug of the shoulders, as "Oh yes, a practical Catholic, but none too fond of his prayers." That is, he managed by hook or by crook to find some priest to absolve him once a year at Easter time; but if sorrow for sin and a firm purpose of amendment are to be judged by subsequent conduct, his yearly Confession was sadly lacking in these necessary dispositions.

Bart, nothing loath to enjoy Father Casey's genial companionship, sat with him far into the night, but by clever seamanship had so far managed to steer at a safe distance from the danger zone of religion.

"The crime wave," said the broker, warming to a

subject very near his heart, "which threatens the life and property of every honest man in the land, will become daily more menacing until our court procedure is reformed — radically reformed — so that criminals can be brought to speedy and condign punishment."

"The crime wave," corrected the priest, "will become daily more menacing until the people of the country learn what faith teaches about the hideousness of sin. All the courts in the world will not make men resist their wicked passions so long as they forget that a grievous sin is the greatest of evils."

"Come now, Father Casey, admit between you and me that a — what we call a mortal sin, provided it is not a violation of any one's life or property, is not such a terrible thing!"

"A mortal sin," said the priest, "in order to be a mortal sin, must be a fully conscious, a deliberate offence against God in a serious matter. How can you, who condemn so severely crimes against individuals or society, how can you pretend that a deliberate offence against the great Creator of individuals and society is an affair of little moment!"

"Well," said Bart, "I simply can't see the harm in it as I can see the harm in the injury that a burglar or a cut-throat would do to some one I know."

"Which merely proves," said Father Casey, "that you do not know God as you know mortal men, though to know God, the Creator, is the first duty of every reasonable creature. Yet God knows you; he is with you at all times. When you commit a grievous sin you insult Him to His very face — Him who made you and preserves you and gives you all that you have and all that you are!"

"Oh, He does not take it so seriously! He knows

that we are human, and He gives us a liberal discount on that head!"

"He does not take it seriously!" cried the priest. "Let me tell you what He did on account of mortal sin and then judge whether or not He takes it seriously! You know that God has existed from all eternity. In the beginning there was no other besides Him, for He is the only being that exists of itself; all other beings must be created by Him, either directly or indirectly, before they can begin to exist. He, possessing every good quality in its highest degree, was all-sufficient unto Himself; He needed no one else to make Him happy. But in His great love and kindness He resolved to create other beings that they might share His happiness. He created the angels. You know, of course, (there was an interrogation sign in the priest's voice) what an angel is."

"Yes, yes," broke in Bart, "my wife's first husband — he was an angel — 33rd degree — or archangel — or whatever you call the ones that hold the soft jobs up there and sit on the board of heavenly directors."

"An angel," continued Father Casey, heedless of Killalee's blasphemy, and determined not to be turned aside from the serious question under consideration, "is a spirit without a body or any of the imperfections of a body. An angel is a being of transcendant beauty, of dazzling brightness, of astounding power, of sublime knowledge. God, in His goodness, loved these glorious beings. He wished them to love Him in return — not through necessity but freely; therefore He gave them perfect liberty. Many of them used this liberty to honor and worship God, and as a reward, they were confirmed forever in His love. But one-

third of them became proud — proud of their own beauty and strength — rebelled against their God and committed the first mortal sin. What followed? God created hell, that prison of unending torments — it was not in His original plan, if sin had not been committed it would never have been created — and then in an instant, without giving them one moment for repentance, He hurled the rebel angels into the abyss, and doomed them to suffer there forever. Think of it, for one mortal sin, and that a sin of thought, the sin of an instant, He condemned to hell millions of those bright spirits whom He had loved so well, and changed them irrevocably from beautiful angels into hideous demons. And yet you say that He does not take sin seriously.

"Listen further," continued the priest, noting that the broker's conscience was making him decidedly uncomfortable, "in order to fill up the heavenly thrones left vacant by the fallen angels, God resolved to create the human race. He created Adam to His own image and likeness and gave him Eve as a helpmate, and placed them in the garden of paradise. The first man and woman, as they issued from the creative hand of God, were perfect in body and soul. Their minds were bright and clear as those of the angels. They possessed all knowledge by intuition without the labor of study. Their wills were inclined only to good. The fearful interior conflicts between right and wrong that nearly tear asunder our own poor souls were unknown to them. Acts of heroic virtue were as easy for them as sins are for their fallen children. They were not obliged to labor; they were never sick; they were not to die. After a few years spent amid the delights of the garden of paradise they were to be taken

up alive into heaven to be happy there forever more. Indeed, such noble beings were this first man and woman that, as Scripture tells us, Almighty God Himself would come down and walk with them in the evening shades of Paradise. And we, their children, were to inherit all these blessings that a merciful Providence had freely given them. The devil could not bear to see man take possession of the throne he had lost. He took the appearance of a serpent, dragged his slimy form into that hitherto happy retreat, and by his accursed lying and deceit induced our first parents to disobey God — to commit mortal sin. That moment our doom was sealed; the human race was condemned to death. For by that sin, says St. Paul, death entered the world. That hour, as we read in the first book of the Holy Bible, God cursed the earth on account of mortal sin. Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise; they and all their children were condemned to struggle through this world with darkened minds and perverted wills, earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, subject to misery, sickness, and death. Can you realize that all the suffering that has embittered the lives of men during the last six thousand years, has been sent by God in punishment of one mortal sin, and still dare to say that God does not take sin seriously!

"And what that mortal sin did to the world," continued Father Casey relentlessly, "your mortal sins, Bart Killalee, did to your own soul. While you were in the state of grace, before you lost your baptismal innocence or after a good confession, you were a child of God, and as a child of God, an heir to His kingdom, a prince royal of the heavenly court. The Blessed Virgin Mary called you her child, the saints

and angels, their own dear brother. But the moment you committed mortal sin, you renounced your birthright, your heavenly Father disowned you, the Blessed Mother, the angels and saints turned away from you in sorrow, and you became the rightful property of the devil. The moment you committed mortal sin you killed your soul; you did not take away its natural life, that will remain forever, even in hell, but you took away its supernatural life. A soul deprived of supernatural life is far more hideous than a putrid corpse from which life has long departed. You could never bring yourself to lie down at night beside a dead body; how then can you spend day and night bound to a dead soul? If God would show to the world your soul, dead in mortal sin, men and beasts would flee from you in terror. Such a soul is a blot upon the fair face of God's creation. There is only one place fit for it, and that is hell. You know not what moment God may cut the slender thread of your life and allow your soul to fall into hell. So long as you remain in mortal sin you are daring, defying Him to do so. God will not be mocked forever; He will call many a one to his final account before to-morrow's dawn; you may be among the number!"

Bart Killalee's proud head was bowed.

"Father," he said hoarsely, "I want to make a real Confession. Is it possible for you to hear me now?"

"I will hear your Confession, Bart, but not until I have given you one more proof of the evil of mortal sin. You are sorry for your sins now because you have aroused God's anger; I want you to be sorry, too, because you have wounded His love. Come with me in spirit to witness a touching scene. It is night. Jesus kneels in the shadow of the olive trees in the gar-

den of Gethsemani. He begins to grow sorrowful and to be sad for the hour has come when He will be delivered up for the sins of the world. And now He sees these sins with a vividness hitherto unknown. All sins, past, present, and to come, are before His imagination in one hideous vision. And yet despite their multitude, He sees each sin singly in all its details. He sees that last mortal sin that you committed as clearly as if He were about to die for it alone. Indeed, even though there were no others, that sin alone would have been sufficient to cause His death. No human intelligence, no saint, no angel ever realized the malice of sin as He realizes it in this moment. And yet He must take this awful load of guilt upon Himself and atone for it in His tender body or we will never be forgiven. How His pure Soul recoils at the thought! Is there no other way to save mankind? 'Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away from me.' There is no other way. Mortal sin is an infinite offense; it requires an infinite atonement. Then follows a fearful struggle in His adorable Soul. His love for us urges Him to assume our guilt, whilst His horror for sin recoils at the very thought. In the sharpness of that fearful agony His heart contracts and forces His precious Blood from every pore. In a crimson sweat it runs trickling down in great drops upon the ground. Love conquers; He accepts the work of atonement. 'Father,' He prays, 'if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done.' And He falls with His face upon the earth. The guilt of men is heaped upon Him and He becomes the victim for our sins. From that moment earth and heaven have no more mercy for Him. His own apostle betrays Him; His other followers abandon Him;

His chosen people, whose sick He had healed, whose dead He had raised to life, cry, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Bound to a pillar and scourged until His bones could be numbered He atones for sins of impurity. Crowned in derision with a crown of thorns, mocked and spit upon, He atones for sins of pride, envy, and hatred. Loaded with His cross and led through the streets like the lowest criminal, He atones for sins of impatience and rebellion against God in trials and afflictions. Stripped of His bloody garments and raised naked on the cross, He atones for the sins of avarice, dishonesty, and double-dealing. Such ingratitude from those He loves wrings with anguish His dying heart. He can bear no more. He cries to heaven in accents of unspeakable agony, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!' But heaven has no response. The Father has no word of comfort for His well beloved Son. That Son is covered by our mortal sins, and He is become a thing of loathing in His Father's sight. Justice must be accomplished; He must die the death. 'For the wickedness of My people,' says the Eternal Father, 'for the wickedness of My people have I struck Him.' And bowing down His head, He expires. Abandoned by heaven and tortured by earth, a God dies upon a cross! Now, at least, you see the malice of mortal sin."

* * * The thick logs had burned away to a heap of glowing embers, but an old grey head was still humbly bowed over Father Casey's knee while Bart Killalee confessed his sins. It was perhaps the first time in many a year that he had that genuine sorrow without which Confession is of no avail.

THE EAR-MARKS OF THE BEAST

"Out o' that sugar, ye spalpeen! Haven't I been tellin' ye it's a mortial sin!"

These words, vociferated in a high-pitched, angry female voice, followed by a blow and a scream, were what Father Casey heard as he approached the squalid rooms which Mat Barragry and his family called home. The priest affected a violent fit of coughing to notify the inmates of his coming. There was a scurrying of feet as the half-dressed children disappeared from sight, and Mat's wife wiped her hot, dirty face on her still more dirty apron and adjusted sundry pins in her tattered gown. Mat himself made no move beyond taking the grimy pipe from his lips and turning his watery, bloodshot eyes toward the door.

"Kitty Barragry, what sort of teaching is that for a Catholic mother to be giving her children — telling them it's a mortal sin to take sugar from the cupboard?" cried Father Casey.

"Sure, yer Reverence, it's the only way I can make them mind. Barrin' mortal sin, there's nothing they're afeerd of, and they're mighty little afeerd o' that. Out wid ye! How dare ye show yourselves before the priesht widout yer waists on!"

But the children evidently had more love for the priest than fear of their mother, for they began sneaking in from bedroom and alley, and gathered about his chair. Well for Father Casey that he was not given to thinking about his personal appearance, for he

would have been horrified at seeing the greasy little hands that were clasped on his knees or tugging at his coat tails. His heart went out in pity to these poor children. It was some dozen years since he had united in marriage their father and mother, Mat Barragry and Kitty Kilgallon. Mat and Kitty were then fresh from the "auld sod." They had brought with them to the land of the West the untold treasure of chaste, healthy bodies, clear minds, and a strong, living faith. They had every prospect of becoming esteemed and influential members of the community as so many of their compatriots have done. But the drink! Mat lost one good position after another, until he finally sank so low that he never did a day's work unless driven to it by thirst or the police. And Kitty — ambitious, industrious, high-spirited Kitty — what a disillusionment was hers! First grief, then suffering, privations, brutalizing labor, then discouragement, slovenliness and despair, and finally — but it is not the first time that a drunken husband has been answerable for a drunken wife.

Amid all their sin and squalor, Father Casey knew that the clear light of faith inherited from martyred ancestors had not been extinguished, nor the sacredness of conjugal fidelity violated, and therefore he trusted that the mercy of God would find a way of saving these poor, erring creatures in the end. Above all, he saw the absolute necessity of giving correct and thorough instruction in the faith to the Barragry children. Without faith, their unfortunate environment would make these children develop into brutes rather than human beings. That was why he regretted to hear Mrs. Barragry teaching them false doctrine on such an important point as the nature of grievous sin.

"Too much sugar is bad for childhre, yer Reverence. Sure it rots their teeth and spiles their stomachs."

They would have had teeth as solid as an elephant's, God help them, if sugar were the only thing to ruin them. For, the truth must be told, the only sugar that found its way into the house for many a day was the wee bag Mrs. Barragry kept hidden away to sweeten her toddy.

"I don't deny that the excessive use of sugar is hurtful to children's bodies, but false teaching is far more hurtful to their souls. It is very wrong for you to give them a false conscience by telling them that a certain thing is a mortal sin when you know, or ought to know, that it is nothing of the kind. If you make them believe that every little thing is a mortal sin, they will at last despair of being able to avoid it, and fall into every shameful vice."

"Sure," contended Mrs. Barragry, "takin' sugar widout lave is stealing, and the prayer book says that stealing is a sin."

"True, that is just what the prayer book says; and it says further that if the thing you steal is of little value, you commit a venial sin, and if it is of considerable value you commit a mortal sin. But you were telling the children that to steal a handful of sugar is a mortal sin. That is false teaching."

"Why," broke in Mat, "should the likes of us bother about thim fine points of theology? We have full confidence in the larning of our priests, and we lave all that to thim."

"Your priests feel highly complimented to hear of your high opinion of them. But that does not excuse you from the obligation of learning the funda-

mental teachings of your holy religion. The difference between mortal and venial sin is by no means a fine point, but a very blunt and visible one, and one that every Catholic is obliged to know."

"It was always my belief that the juty of a Christian is not to *know* sins but to *avoid* them." Thus did Mat deliver his sly cut.

"The duty of a Christian is not to avoid all sin absolutely. That is impossible, and what is impossible is no man's duty. The duty of a Christian is to avoid absolutely all mortal sin, which is rebellion against God and death to the soul, and to avoid as far as he can venial sin, which, though offensive to God, does not destroy our friendship with Him. Hence the necessity of knowing the difference between the two. Again, in Confession you must tell all the mortal sins you remember, else your Confession is bad, while on the other hand you are not obliged to tell your venial sins, though it is praiseworthy to do so. And, in like manner, your Confession is bad unless you are sorry for all your mortal sins and firmly determined, with the help of God, not to repeat them, while, on the other hand, your Confessions can be made good without sorrow and purpose of amendment concerning venial sin. This is another reason why every Christian must know the difference betwen mortal and venial sin."

"Father, I think I know the difference," said Nellie.

"Now, let's all listen to Nellie's explanation."

Nellie, the oldest of the Barragry children, had but just passed her eleventh birthday, yet already care and worry and suffering had made her old in bitter experience. She bestowed upon her younger brothers and sisters all the motherly care which their own mother neglected. And they all loved her like a mother, not

even excepting Mickey, her scapegrace brother of ten, who was an aspirant for the leadership of the Wharf Street gang of juvenile toughs.

"First of all tell us," said Father Casey, "what is meant by a mortal sin."

"A mortal sin," answered Nellie, "is any thought, word, or deed contrary to the law of God or the precepts of the Church, committed in a serious matter, with sufficient reflection, and full consent of the will."

"Correct," said the priest. "Therefore you see that for a mortal sin, three things are required: first, serious matter; secondly, sufficient reflection or attention of the mind; thirdly, full, entire consent of the will. Let me see whether you all understand. Of course Mickey said his prayers last night before he went to bed?"

"The divil a prayer — beggin' yer Reverence's pardon," corrected Mrs. Barragry. "I hunted him out of bed three times, and still he wouldn't say them."

"Was that a mortal sin for Mickey?"

"Yes, father," came the unanimous answer.

"No," said Father Casey, "it was not a mortal sin, because it is not *serious matter* to miss your prayers once, even though you do it on purpose. But if you would not say your prayers at all for a long time, that would undoubtedly be *serious matter*. Again, suppose Nellie would tell a deliberate lie—"

"Oh, Fader," broke in little John Philpot, "Nellie wouldn't do dat!"

"Well, would *you?*"

"Not very often, Fader."

"You shouldn't do it at all, John Philpot. But suppose you did, would that be a mortal sin? Ah, I see that none of you know whether it would or not.

Well, let me tell you: If the lie did not hurt anyone very much, it would not be a mortal sin, because it would not be *serious matter.* It would, however, be a venial sin, and a very ugly fault in a Catholic boy."

"Would you mind telling us, yer Reverence, some things that would be *serious matter?*" said Mat, who had now become an interested listener.

"Why, for instance, to read papers and books against faith or morality; to utter very bad curses or blasphemies; to take a false oath or an oath imposed in a forbidden secret society; to miss Holy Mass, or to work without necessity for several hours on a Sunday or holyday of obligation; to eat meat on days of abstinence; to take more than one full meal on days on which you are obliged to fast; to miss your Easter duty; for children to cause their parents great sorrow or anger by their disobedience; for parents to scandalize their children or neglect the care of their bodies or souls; to bear hatred against anyone, or to do serious injury to his life or health; to drink to excess or to waste upon drink and gambling the money necessary for the support of the family [Mat winced]; for single persons to indulge in any immodest thought or deed, or for married persons to desire or do anything contrary to the laws of holy wedlock; to steal or destroy property of considerable value belonging to another; to tell a lie that would do great injury to your neighbor, or to ruin his reputation by publishing his secret sins,— these are the most common examples of *serious matter* in transgressions against the law of God."

"I'm afraid," said little Allie, "that I done some mortal sins and didn't know it."

"That, my child, is impossible. No one can com-

mit a mortal sin without knowing it. To commit a mortal sin is to offend, to displease God very much; but God is reasonable, He will never be displeased with anything you do unless He sees that you know it is wrong. On the other hand, do not forget that if you believe that a certain action is serious matter, and you do it anyhow, you are guilty of mortal sin even though the thing may not have been serious matter in itself. That is why we say that the first requisite for mortal sin is that the matter be serious *at least in the opinion of the person performing the act.* For instance, here is Bobby. He thinks it is wrong to eat a snake on Friday, yet he eats it anyhow. Bobby commits a mortal sin, for he believes he is breaking the law of God in a serious matter, though in reality he is not."

"No, I didn't, neither, eat no snake," protested the maligned Robert.

"Father, what did you say is the second thing required to make a mortal sin?" inquired Nellie.

"The second requisite is *sufficient reflection.* By this I mean that you are never guilty of mortal sin unless at the very moment you make the sinful act of the will, you remember that it is seriously wrong. You miss Mass on a holyday; but you forget all about its being a holyday. Or some one treads on your ingrowing toenail, and in the first stab of pain, before you think, you strike him a serious blow, or you take pleasure in unchaste thoughts before you happen to notice that they are wrong. In none of these cases do you commit a mortal sin, for in none of them was there sufficient reflection.

"The third requisite for mortal sin is *full consent* of the will. If meat were forced down your throat

on Friday, or if you were violently thrust into a place where it is wrong to go, it would not be mortal sin, because there was no consent of the will. Understand me; I mean when you are seized and forced to do a thing, not when you are merely frightened into doing it. If you would do wrong because somebody pointed a loaded pistol at your head and commanded you to do it, you would be guilty, for that would be acting with full consent of the will. You must be like the martyrs of Christ, ready to die rather than do wrong. To come down to practical life, the most ordinary case where lack of *full consent* frees one from mortal sin, is in the matter of sinful thoughts. They may be thoughts against faith, blasphemous thoughts, thoughts of hatred, immodest thoughts. They may come to your mind constantly; they may remain for hours at a time. But if you make an honest effort to avoid them, to keep from thinking of them, then you never commit a mortal sin, for there is not *full consent* of the will. There may unfortunately be a venial sin because you were imprudent in your looks or your reading and thus unknowingly caused the thoughts, or because you were a little negligent in banishing them, but there can never be a mortal sin because there was not *full consent* of the will. Now I am sure that you all understand well what we mean when we say that there must be serious matter, sufficient reflection, and full consent to constitute a mortal sin — a mortal sin, that worst of all evils, which kills our souls, makes the good God our enemy, and condemns us to the eternal pains of hell."

"Bobby, ye little imp," cried Mrs. Barragry, "lave go o' that poor cat's tail. Haven't I been tellin' ye it's a mortial sin!"

AMONG THE MINISTERS' WIVES

It was "Home Coming Day" in the old town, and Father Casey, with other "representative citizens," was down for a speech. He was met at the entrance of the park by members of the Ladies' Entertainment Committee and ushered at once to the clergymen's table, where he found the leading ministers and their wives already assembled. A prominent place had been reserved for him. This distinction was due partly to the fact that all instinctively acknowledged the important place he held in the life of the community, and partly to the fact that the ministers' wives were set on examining the "curiosity" from a point of vantage.

"Father Casey, lunch is ready. May we call upon you to give thanks."

He stood up and, without affecting any sanctimonious airs, said simply:

"Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

There was an ill-disguised sigh of relief around the table. The priest's blessing was short and appropriate, so unlike the long-winded harangues other clergymen sometimes inflict upon the good Lord and the hungry guests.

Cold chicken, stuffed duck and turkey, sliced ham, cold tongue buried in little quaking mountains of gelatine, venison and wild fowl — all prepared by skillful

housewives at their very best — there was such abundance as to give the long picnic table a decided list to the starboard. Father Casey quietly passed along the appetizing meats untouched, and devoted himself to olives and pickles, potato salad and delicious home made bread with yellow dairy butter. "When will they ever stop passing meat and urging me to 'Please, Father Casey, just try a little slice'?" This is what the good priest was thinking within himself, when suddenly it flashed across his mind that there might be malice in this persistence. His suspicions were soon confirmed.

"Has meat on Friday the nature of poison for a Catholic stomach, really?" queried a dominie's wife with feigned simplicity.

"Surely not, when the meat has been prepared by such unrivaled cooks as those who are doing the honors today!" parried Father Casey in the hope of sidetracking the unpleasant topic.

"Michael Carrock here thinks it is poison, don't you, Michael?" drawled the better half of the Rev. Mr. Dibble, turning to a man-of-all-work who was prying open a case of grape juice for the clergymen's table. "Do you remember the day you were taking dinner in our kitchen, and just when you had your mouth full of steak, I said: 'Oh, Michael, it's Friday.' And you ran to the sink and nearly choked yourself trying to spit out the meat. Do you remember, Michael, how I laughed?"

"Faith an' I do. Yer sweet smile haunts me still, as Shakespeare says," returned Michael with a forced laugh, but the malicious twinkle in his eye showed that he would have his revenge for this humiliation at the first opportunity.

"The law of abstinence did not oblige Michael to make such a scene as that," explained Father Casey. "Since he was at table and in the presence of others when he remembered it was Friday, he could have swallowed what he had in his mouth, but should not have taken what still remained on his plate."

"If I had been Michael," said Mrs. Dibble, "I would not have been afraid to swallow what I had in my mouth nor to eat what I had on my plate, either. There's no harm in a piece of meat."

"Neither is there any harm in an apple, yet the whole human race was condemned to suffering and death because Adam ate one. There is no harm either in an apple or in a piece of meat, but there is harm in the bad will we evince by taking them when they are forbidden.

"Try a little of this cold venison yourself," mockingly persisted Mrs. Dibble. "If it proves poisonous to your Catholic stomach, we shall hasten to administer an antidote.

"Madam," said the priest, growing nettled, "if a friend of ours were to lose his life in order to save us from a bitter death, gratitude would require us to keep his death day sacred and devote it to affectionate mourning. On Friday, Jesus Christ died to save all, you non-Catholics as well as us Catholics. We Catholics commemorate the day by a practical and definite act of voluntary self-denial — abstinence from meat. If you non-Catholics are not willing to deny yourselves in anything to show your gratitude to the Saviour who died for you on Friday, at least, Madam, you should be ashamed to make fun of us for doing so!"

"Yes, yes, yes; to be sure, to be sure," piped a little peace-at-any-price parson. "But isn't it rather incon-

venient sometimes? Fish and eggs might make one ill, don't you know!"

"It is inconvenient; but inconvenience is the principal ingredient in self-denial. Injury to health would be quite another thing. But health is seldom injured by abstinence from meat. Indeed, medical men tell us that we all eat more meat than is for our good. However, at any time that we have legitimate proof that abstinence from meat constitutes a serious menace to our health, we are allowed to eat meat. The Church is a kind mother. In the very act of making this law she intended that we should be freed from its obligation whenever its observance would be injurious or abnormally difficult."

"What do you mean by 'legitimate proof that abstinence is injurious to health'?"

"The joint decision of the physician and the priest. However, the decision of the priest alone is ordinarily sufficient nowadays," replied Father Casey.

"Is no one allowed to decide for himself?"

"Anyone that is capable is allowed to do so. But, you know," continued Father Casey, "it is always risky to undertake to act as judge in one's own case. Besides, the priest is empowered not only to judge when the difficulty is great enough to free us from the law, but often also to dispense us from the law when the gravity of the difficulty is doubtful."

"Yes, yes, yes; to be sure, to be sure," chimed in the peaceful parson.

"That's all perfectly lovely," said the Reverend Mr. Trawler; "but the Catholics of the lower classes seem wedded to the foolish fancy that they are guilty of sin if they eat meat on Friday."

"Catholics of all classes hold that doctrine, Mr. Trawler."

"I know a family of Catholics, very dear friends of mine, who move in high society, and who do not hesitate to eat meat on Friday," interposed Mrs. Dibble.

"They are Catholics who think more of high society than of their souls," said Father Casey. "That eating meat on Friday is a sin is not a foolish fancy but an undeniable fact."

"That is a statement I cannot admit," said the Reverend Mr. Trawler.

"When this country commissions Congress to make laws, whose authority is behind the laws it makes?" asked the priest.

"Why, the authority of the country, to be sure."

"Quite so; and when Jesus Christ commissions a Church to make laws, the authority of Jesus Christ is behind the laws of that Church. But you cannot deny that to break laws enacted on the authority of Jesus Christ is a sin."

"Our church makes laws, yet we do not consider it sinful to break them."

"Which, if it proves anything," said Father Casey, "proves that your church has received no legislative power from Jesus Christ."

"And when, pray, has the Catholic Church received such power?"

"When Jesus Christ said to the rulers of the Catholic Church: '(Whoever) will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. Amen, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven.' Again: 'He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth

you, despiseth Me.' If you think that these texts do not prove my point, it is more than proved by the fact that Jesus Christ founded the society we call the Catholic Church. It would be foolish to found a society without giving it legislative power which is necessary for its existence."

"If this law is based on the authority of Jesus Christ, how can Catholics treat it so lightly?" urged Mr. Trawler. "I have seen a whole hall full of Catholics — priests and even bishops among them — eat meat on Friday when the feast of St. Patrick fell on that day!"

"My dear sir," said the priest, "you fall into the common error of charging that a law has been violated before you know what the law really prescribes. You shout, 'Foul play,' before learning the rules of the game. The law of abstinence, as framed by the Church, does not forbid meat on Friday absolutely. That is, it does not forbid one to eat meat when he is excused, as I said, by an abnormal difficulty, or legitimately dispensed. For instance, we are all dispensed by a general decree whenever a holyday of obligation falls on Friday. Then, too, any person or group of persons may be dispensed by a special concession if they have a good reason and appeal to the proper authority, as, no doubt, was done on the St. Patrick's Day to which you refer."

"How foreign to Gospel simplicity are the interminable regulations of the Romish Church!" ejaculated the scandalized Trawler.

"The Catholic, or, as you say, Romish Church makes her regulations to be obeyed, and therefore, with her intimate knowledge of human nature, she sees the necessity of modifying and sometimes dis-

pensing in them according to the needs of varying ages, places, and circumstances. It is easy enough for some of the Protestant religions to observe your 'Gospel simplicity' in making laws, for they know that nobody cares whether he observes these laws or not."

"Catholics may hedge themselves in with as many complicated laws as they please," said a Hard Shell Baptist; "we, for our part, enjoy the liberty of the sons of God. We have no laws except those found in the Bible."

"You don't mean it!" cried Father Casey.

"Indeed I do; every word," returned he of the adamantine shell.

"Why, man," said the priest, "I can show that at least fifty-two times a year you do the direct opposite. Which day do you keep holy, Saturday or Sunday?"

"Sunday, sir."

"Then you are keeping a law not found in the Bible, but imposed by the Catholic Church! No man has ever been able to prove that the law of Sunday observance is found in the Bible. It receives all its binding power from the traditions of the Catholic Church. And as for the 'liberty of the sons of God,' I have met scores of men in the penitentiary who strongly maintained that, according to their interpretation of the Bible, the liberty they had taken with the property or life of their neighbor was only the liberty of the sons of God. This shows whither Protestants' private interpretation will lead. It shows, too, how inconsistent you are — locking a man up with a head shave and a striped suit for using the principle of private interpretation which you have taught him."

"Well, anyhow," broke in Mrs. Dibble as categoric-

ally as though she were advancing an entirely new and irrefutable argument, "we are not afraid a piece of meat will poison us; we keep the laws in the Bible, and that is enough."

Father Casey smiled at the hopelessness of using common sense arguments with a minister's wife. Then, in tones of mock horror, he said:

"Then, for heaven's sake, Madam, desist from your attack upon those pickled pigs' feet! And you are eating the wing of a chicken that was strangled! The flesh of swine and of things strangled is expressly forbidden in the Bible."

"I know that such things are forbidden in one part of the Bible, but Paul tells us that law has been abrogated."

"The best Scripture scholars of today, Protestant as well as Catholic, say that it is doubtful whether Paul says anything of the kind. The law stands in the Bible. Therefore, according to your principle, you must observe it until you find clear proof in the Bible that it has been abrogated for the whole world and not merely for the special times and places to which Paul probably restricts his words. The next time you prepare an outdoor luncheon consult your Jewish neighbors about the best substitute for cold pork and strangled fowl."

"Ask her, Father Tim," said Michael, still smarting under his humiliation, "to name the strangest thing at a Hebrew picnic."

"Ask her yourself, Michael; I was never good at riddles. What is it?"

"The *ham sandwich*, yer reverence. Both Jews an' Protestants follow the private judgment of an empty

stomach against the Bible, whenever the Good Book stands in the way of a hearty meal," said Michael, as he drew the cork from a flask of Billy Bryan's Bottled Bliss.

THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

They were four jolly men that bobbed and butted over the Pullman wash-basins and made frantic efforts to convey double handfuls of the splashing water to their sleepy eyes, while the belated "Midnight Special" took the curves at a rate of speed that blurred the "Safety First" signs painted on the cab. In the first stages of their toilet — the stages of tooth brushes, combs, and safety razors — there was nothing to distinguish these men except that one — the one with the broad shoulders, kindly eyes, and ready smile — had won the others by his sparkling wit. As the toilet proceeded, distinctions began to appear — one man slipped into his vest pocket, a watch with a Masonic guard, another drew on a coat with a Real Estate Men's button in ebony and gold on the lapel and one — he of the broad shoulders — horrors! — fastened about his throat a Roman collar. At the sight of this article of apparel the other three dropped their jaws in amazement. One found his tongue and blurted out:

"Well by — by — jove, are you a priest?"

"Reverend Timothy Casey, at your service. They that know me best call me Father Tim."

His continued good nature dispelled the gloom generated by the Roman collar, and the real estate agent said banteringly:

"Father Tim, can you forgive my sins?"

"To be sure I can if I judge you fit."

"Well, begin your judgment."

"Do you think," said the priest, "that I can see the state of your soul by looking at your nose? If you want me to judge whether you are fit to be forgiven by me, you must tell me what you are, what you believe, what wrong you have thought, said, and done, whether you are sorry for it, and why you are sorry. In other words you must go to Confession."

The Mason dropped the shoe lace he was tying and eyed Father Casey.

"You priests make people go to Confession so that you can learn the state of their souls and judge whether they are in a fit condition for you to pardon them. Is that the point?"

"To a T," said Father Casey.

"Confound it, that sounds like horse sense! I could have sworn that Confession was the most unreasonable ——"

"How can you pretend to be able to forgive sins?" broke in the real estate agent. "You are not God."

"You are not John D. Rockefeller, either are you?" queried Father Casey.

"Not by several millions!" groaned he of the Real Estate Men's button.

"Could you sell me 160 acres of Rockefeller's farming land in Burnham County?"

"I could if he made me agent and ordered me to sell it. And, believe me, if John D. would so much as say the word 'Come,' you couldn't see me for the dust."

"Well, you will not think I am going too far when I say that Almighty God can do as much as Rockefeller. Therefore, though I am not God, if God

would make me His agent and command me to forgive sins, I could forgive them.

"When did God make you his agent?"

"When He said: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' And again: 'Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.' Could Christ, Our God and Lord, have used plainer words to give the power to forgive sins?"

"The words are plain enough, but He didn't say them to you," said the agent.

"He said them to the men He had appointed to take care of His Church, the Apostles. Now, you don't pretend that He wanted His Church to last only as long as the Apostles lived. Neither do you claim that He gave the power of forgiving sins to the first twelve men He appointed to take care of His Church, and wanted that power to die with them. You don't maintain that, do you?"

"Naw, I suppose not."

"If the power of forgiving sins, which Christ gave to the first rulers of His Church, did not cease at their death, what became of it?" urged the priest.

"I suppose their successors got it," reluctantly conceded the agent.

"Of course they did," said Father Casey. "And who, except the clergy of the Catholic Church, are the true, legitimate successors of the Apostles?"

The agent was nettled. He assumed a graceful and commanding pose in order to add weight to his next argument; just then the train gave a savage lurch that landed him fairly in the Mason's lap. The jolt jarred

loose his last argument. He sprang to his feet and cried hotly.

"Even if Christ did give the priests and pope power to forgive sins, that is no justification for them to force the people to come and tell them their sins. If you have the power to forgive sins, you can use it without bulldozing the people into confessing all their secret sins to you."

"So the priests and popes invented Confession, did they? When was that?"

"It was — it was — let me see — I've heard all about that. It was a conference — a council, where the pope and priests got together and figured out that first class stunt to keep the people under their thumbs."

"You are most likely," said the priest, "trying to rehash that ancient yarn about the fourth Lateran Council, in the thirteenth century, inventing Confession. I can help you. That council, made up of the pope and the bishops of the universal Church, reminded the people of their obligation of confessing their sins at least once a year. And you call that a proof that Confession was invented by the pope and his colleagues in the thirteenth century?"

"I surely do."

"Say, a colored gentleman came through a few moments ago and reminded us that breakfast is served in the dining car. Is that a proof that the dusky genius invented breakfast?"

"You say," continued Father Casey, "that the priests and the pope invented Confession. Did you ever hear that the Catholic laymen of the whole world rose up in angry protest, when the priests first laid this insupportable burden upon them? Did you?"

"I don't know that I did," grunted the agent.

"That alone proves that the priests and the pope did not invent Confession. Do you imagine that the Catholic laity would have submitted to such arrogance on the part of the Clergy without a word of protest? Suppose," he continued, addressing the Mason, "the Masonic Order would pass a law to-morrow, obliging the members to confess all their sinful thoughts, words, and deeds, to the local officers, what would happen?"

"They would take the men who made the law and pitch them out of the window," said the Mason.

"Of course they would," said Father Casey. "And Catholics would have done the same, had their priests usurped God's power and tried to impose Confession upon the world by their own authority. The fact that nowhere in the history of the Christian era do we find records of the people protesting that the priests had just introduced Confession — this fact proves that at no time during the Christian era did the priests introduce Confession, and therefore, that it must have been in existence from the very beginning of Christianity. In fact we find mention of Confession in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, in the symbolical signs in the catacombs, and even in the Bible.

"You say that the priests and the popes invented Confession," continued Father Casey. "If that were true, do you think they would have been such fools as to include themselves under the law. The priests and the pope do not enjoy going to Confession any more than the ordinary layman. In fact it is harder for them to go to Confession than it is for a layman. Yet they are strictly bound by the law to confess their

sins humbly and minutely. This alone proves that they did not make the law of Confession."

"If they did not make the law of Confession, then who did?" cried the agent.

"Jesus Christ, the God-Man," said Father Casey solemnly, bowing his head in reverence to the Holy Name.

Such was the impression made upon all by these words that they were silent for a brief space. Soon however the agent rallied to the charge.

"Do us the favor of citing the text from Scripture wherein Christ made the law obliging all men to confess their sins to the priest."

"My friend, a text from Scripture is neither necessary nor in itself sufficient to prove any doctrine of Christ. Ten hundred warring sects have succeeded in distorting the texts of Scripture, each to prove its own particular doctrines. To hand down Christ's law to us, it is absolutely necessary that there be a living, unerring, infallible teacher. That teacher Christ provided in St. Peter and his successors, the popes of the Catholic Church. They teach that Christ made the law of Confession, and therefore we are certain of it with the certainty of divine faith. However, since you are asking for Scripture texts, I shall cite two that show as clearly as it is possible for words to show that Christ made the law of Confession. The first is taken from the 22nd chapter of St. John: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' The second is taken from the 18th chapter of St. Matthew: 'Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatso-

ever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.' "

"You cited those texts before to prove that you had power of forgiving sins. I don't see a word in either of them proving that the people must confess their sins."

"You see at least that Christ gave to the Apostles and their successors the power, not merely to loose, but to bind, not merely to forgive sins, but retain them. You see that, don't you?"

"I see that, but what connection ——"

"In other words, you see that Christ gave them power to pass sentence; He made them judges over sin. Now Christ is God; He can do no wrong. And, mark well, it would have been wrong for Him to give certain men the power of judging and of forgiving or condemning all mankind, without at the same time obliging these men to use their power with justice and prudence. Now suppose a judge would walk past a line of persons and, without any pretence of trial, without so much as learning the charges against them, would say to one: 'I sentence you to life imprisonment.' To another: 'I fine you $10,000.' 'I order you to be discharged.' 'I sentence you to be hanged.' Unjust and imprudent as that judge would be, he would be no worse than the priest who would use the power of binding and loosing, of forgiving and retaining, without first carefully examining the charges against the culprit and his state of mind and heart with regard to sorrow for the past and amendment for the future. The priest can learn these facts only from the sincere avowal or confession of the penitent; there is no other way. Therefore when Christ gave His priests the power of forgiving and retaining

the sins of all men, by that very fact He imposed upon all men the duty of confessing their sins to the priests, so that the priests may be enabled to use their power with justice and prudence."

"It was a gentleman's game, and you win, Father Tim," cried the agent, grasping the priest's hand.

"A gentleman," said Father Casey, "pays up when he loses."

"I'm a sport. What do I owe?"

"You owe an admission. You have admitted the force and sound sense of my arguments. You owe this assembly the frank admission of the facts my arguments prove. First, do you admit that Christ gave the Apostles and their successors the power to forgive and retain sins?"

"I admit it."

"Secondly, do you admit that when Christ gave this power by that very fact He obliged sinners to confess their sins?"

"I admit it."

"Thirdly, do you admit that, since Christ made no restriction, this obligation is binding on all men?"

"I admit it."

"Then," said Father Casey, "be man enough to live up to your convictions. Begin at once to take a course of instruction that will fit you to be received into the Church and to make your Confession and obtain forgiveness for your sins."

But, alas, the human heart, perverted by this world's riches and pleasures, does not always follow whither the mind points the way. The agent lightly laughed away the distasteful duty on which his eternity depended.

"Father Tim," he said, "I have never committed a sin in my life."

"Shall I brush you, Fathah?" asked the black porter, entering the room.

And Father Casey dropped the religious discussion to hunt through his pockets for the twenty-five cent piece the darkey thus politely demanded at the point of a whisk-broom.

AT THE POLLS

It is the one gathering where the democracy of our American institutions is in evidence — the line up before a polling booth on election day —there the millionaire rubs shoulders with the hod carrier.

"For the love of Mike," growled a broad-shouldered plumber named Dobbs, "why did every gink in the third ward wait till six o'clock to cast his vote!"

"Keep cool, Jack," said Winfield, a munitions manufacturer, who had never before recognized Dobbs since last winter when he had engaged that gentleman to mend a frozen water pipe. "Who are you voting for?"

"Swillbug," replied Dobbs. "I have a sneaking suspicion that that fellow's a scoundrel; but at least he's pledged to fight the Catholics, and when it comes to downing the Pope I'm Johnny on the spot."

"I'm with you there," said the munitions manufacturer.

"I can't get the measure of these Catholics," soliloquized Dobbs with a puzzled air. "There's Mike Ronan — the guy with the red head that just came out of number four. Mike's a Catholic. I've been with him on a dozen jobs, and as far as I can see Mike's as straight as a string."

"Oh, he may be straight as a string and all that, but it only makes him worse. The most dangerous character is the honest-minded fanatic. The moment the Pope gives the word that he wants to be put in

absolute control of the United States government, your Mike Ronan and every other straight Catholic will obey him blindly — and what they begin with the ballot, they'll be ready to finish with the gun."

"That's what they call the Pope's infallibility, isn't it?" suggested Dobbs.

"That's it! That's it, exactly. Their slavish doctrine about the Pope's infallibility makes every Catholic, no matter how good a man he may otherwise be, as treacherous as a rattlesnake. Therefore my slogan is, 'Down with the Catholics!' If Swillbug is the only man that can do it, then my little old ballot goes to Swillbug."

"Is that what papal infallibility means — that the Catholics have to go to war if the Pope tells them to do so?"

"Sure thing," replied both men in a breath as they turned and confronted a broad, pleasant face and a Roman collar.

"You have to go to war when the President tells you, therefore you believe in the President's infallibility," laughed Father Casey, for it was he that had interrupted the conversation of these two fair-minded, unprejudiced voters.

The plumber scowled and mentally shuffled his stock of expletives with a view to deciding on the best combination to hurl at the priest. The munitions manufacturer, on the contrary, reddened slightly. He had spent a few years playing football and attending lectures at Cornell, and enough of his booklearning still adhered to give him the uncomfortable feeling that he had just made an assertion, the falsity of which must be evident to every educated man. Yet he stubbornly vowed not to abandon his trenches.

"We do not believe that the President is infallible. This is quite a different thing from your obedience to the Pope. The President is our lawful ruler and —"

"Is he your lawful ruler in everything? When he tells you to believe a certain religion, to say a certain prayer, to honor God in a certain way, must you obey?"

"The President is our lawful ruler in things political, not in things spiritual," retorted Winfield. "He has no right to interfere in our spiritual affairs; there's no danger that he will ever do so; and even if he did we would not obey him."

"Who gives the President authority over you and me in political things?"

"Why, it has to be traced back to God finally. The Bible says there is no power except from God," said Winfield; whereupon the plumber chimed in with the exact words of the text, St. James' version.

"The same God and Almighty Ruler, that gives the President this power over us in political matters, gives the Pope, Christ's Vicar on earth, power over us in spiritual matters. Every Catholic knows that the Pope has no right to interfere in our purely political concerns; there is no danger that he will ever do so; and even if he did we would not obey him, and we would still be good Catholics. And so there goes your terrible papal infallibility — puff — smoke — nothing!"

"Well — ahem — of course," drawled Winfield. "I didn't exactly mean to allude to the systematic conspiracies of the Catholics to capture certain candidates and certain political parties, as papal infallibility, but rather as one of the effects of belief in papal infallibility."

"Systematic hot air!" snapped the priest. "Are you gentlemen straight enough to give a true answer to a fair question? Have you found that Catholics that enter actively into politics become more fervent or less fervent Catholics than formerly?"

"Why naturally — that depends —"

"Ah, come on and say it straight out. You know as well as I that many an American's political activity weakened his faith as a Catholic, but no American's Catholicity ever augmented his political activity. Which all makes it as clear as the nose — ahem — as clear as daylight [Father Casey noticed barely in time that Winfield had certain prominent features of the Hebrew] that you missed it a mile when you said the activity of certain Catholics at the polls is the effect of their belief in papal infallibility. But, say, what is this papal infallibility anyway? You're coming out to vote down your honest neighbors because they hold the doctrine of papal infallibility and I suppose neither of you have the faintest idea what that doctrine means. Enlightened citizenship, intelligent balloting — I don't think!" Father Casey turned on his heel — but took care not to turn far enough to lose his place in the ranks.

"It means," cried the plumber, hastening to vindicate himself, "that the Pope is a half-god. Any old thing he does is sacred. He couldn't be bad if he tried."

"Look here," said the priest, "you know that Dante was a Catholic."

"Never met the guy. But likely he was. Sounds like a Dago name."

Winfield swore between his teeth at having the ignorance of his ally shown up.

"The priest means Dante, the poet; lived several hundred years ago," he hastened to say. "Well, what has Dante got to do here? Are you going to recite a page of rhymes to prove your point?"

"If you studied your classics while you were at college," said Father Casey, "I won't need to recite any rhymes for you; you will remember what I refer to. While Dante was writing his immortal poem, when he came to a Pope he didn't like, he represented him as being condemned to hell. And Dante was never expelled from the Catholic Church for heresy on this account. Which shows that Catholics don't believe that infallibility means the Pope can do no wrong. In fact, the Popes as a rule confess their sins every week like other good Catholics, and every day at the beginning of their Mass, they strike their breast and say: 'I have sinned.' How does that agree with your idea of papal infallibility?"

Here Winfield, with his superior knowledge, came to the rescue.

"By papal infallibility Catholics mean that the Pope cannot make a mistake. The very word expresses it, Infallibility — to be incapable of error." And Winfield looked about with the patronizing air of the general who has saved the day.

"If I wanted to know the right way to thread a steam pipe and the Pope told me this way, while your friend the plumber here told me that way, which do you think I would believe?"

"Why — well, I suppose you would believe the plumber," conceded Winfield.

"Of course I would; though I hold most firmly to the doctrine of papal infallibility. Hence, my learned friend, you were evidently wrong again when you said

papal infallibility means that the Pope cannot make a mistake."

"Oh, it doesn't mean that he cannot make a mistake when he tells you how to cut threads on a steam pipe, but when he talks about — about — well, about religion and that sort of stuff."

"Bravo!" cried Father Casey, slapping his knee in triumph. "You have given the very definition found in the Catholic catechism. The Pope is infallible only when, acting in his capacity of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be believed by the Universal Church. Mark well; he must first, be acting *in his capacity of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians.* No matter what he does or says in his private capacity, he is no more infallible than you or I. Secondly, he must define a *doctrine regarding faith or morals.* Therefore if he decides a question of fact, and not a question regarding faith or morals, he is not infallible. If, for instance, he were to teach publicly that the sun moves around the earth or that Titius had committed a certain sinful action or that Caius deserved to be beheaded, I would not be obliged to believe him. Thirdly, he must define the doctrine *for the Universal Church.* If in a private conversation he were to tell me what I must believe, he would not be infallible. But whenever in his capacity of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be believed by the Universal Church, God watches over him and does not permit him to make a mistake. That, and that alone, is the teaching of the Catholic Church on papal infallibility. Therefore you see that papal infallibility has about as much to do

with American elections as an elephant with piano tuning."

"How do you know that God will not permit him to make a mistake?" queried the munitions manufacturer.

"I know it," said Father Casey, "because God's Church in council assembled in the person of her bishops, in the year 1870, declared that this is a truth revealed by Christ which all are obliged to believe under pain of eternal damnation."

"Bosh! If the Pope was not infallible during the eighteen hundred years preceding that Council, the bishops could not make him so!"

"Neither did they try," remarked the priest quietly. "The bishops did nothing in 1870 but solemnly publish a truth which had been revealed by Christ and had been believed by the members of Christ's Church for eighteen hundred years. Furthermore, I believe the infallibility of the Pope because the God of Wisdom would act with at least common sense. Every one knows that a written document must have an authorized living interpreter. The Constitution of the United States is as clear as learned and able men could make it. Yet it would be nothing but a source of discussion and trouble without those authorized living interpreters called the Judges of the Supreme Court. Protestants try to follow the written word of God without an authorized living interpreter, and see the result. In this country alone they are divided into nearly a thousand wrangling sects. I believe the infallibility of the Pope because, as even Protestants who know history admit, the Popes are the successors of St. Peter, and Christ said to St. Peter and his successors: 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build

My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' (Mt. XVI.) If it were possible for St. Peter or his successors to err in teaching Christ's doctrine to the Church, then His Church would be built on a crumbling foundation and the gates of hell, the spirits of error, would prevail against it as they have prevailed against the churches that rejected the guidance of Christ's representative on earth. I believe the infallibility of St. Peter and the Pope, who succeeds and represents him, because Christ said to him: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' (Mt. XVI.) 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' (Luke XXII.) 'Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.' (John XXI.) Peter and his successors are, according to Christ's command, to provide the food of salutary doctrine, not only to the lambs, the lay members of the Church, but likewise to the sheep, her Bishops and rulers. That is why I believe in the infallibility of the Pope. What flaw can you find in my arguments?"

"I can't exactly point out a flaw, but — well, I wouldn't debase my reason to the slavish necessity of believing everything the Pope said. I have an intellect of my own, and I follow it."

"That is like what the wrecked mariner said when he refused to be picked up in mid ocean by a liner. 'Go along about yer business. I have my own strong arms,' said he. You are struggling to attain to the possession of revealed truth. Without external help you have less chance of withstanding the waves of error than he had of resisting for days the buffeting of the sea. God sends to your rescue His Ship of Salvation, His Holy Church. He gives you unanswerable

arguments to prove that He is watching over her pilot and preventing him from steering her from the direct course. You refuse to avail yourself of this boon. In your pride, you prefer to follow the guidance of your own weak intellect, which has led you into a thousand errors in matters far simpler than revealed truth, rather than follow the guidance of God which cannot err."

At last the priest's turn had come to enter the booth. He was never known to neglect the parting shot. Looking up at the discomfited Winfield he said:

"Since you are bent on imitating that shipwrecked sailor, it may afford you some consolation to know that he was saved from drowning."

A grunt from the munitions manufacturer was the only response. Dobbs, however, feeling that the joke would not hit him, ventured to ask:

"What saved the bloke from drownding?"

"The fact that a shark ate him," said Father Casey.

A BLOWOUT

It had not been a day of unmixed joy for Father Casey. A flaw had been discovered in the contract for the new school; notice had been served by the building commission that the church would require expensive alterations in conformity with the latest city ordinance; he had learned that the insurance policy would expire before the end of the month; Mrs. Hicks had come, bathed in tears (the only evidence of bathing about her) to say that Rufe Hicks had once more broken his pledge; and, to crown all, he had been notified of the severance of diplomatic relations between the opposing factions of the Altar Society. Verily, it had not been a day of unmixed joy for Father Casey!

"At any rate, I can do nothing in regard to these matters until I am home from this motor ride, so what's the use of spoiling this pleasant hour thinking of them!" Thus soliloquizing, he settled back among the deep cushions of Mr. Murtaugh's Packard, and soon the rhythmic purring of the powerful engine, the prattle of the Murtaugh children, the soothing sights and sounds of the summer twilight drove from his mind all thoughts of care and made him, for the moment, as much the happy child as little Agnes on her stool in the well of the car. The Murtaughs were people of strong lively faith who felt the keenest pleasure in performing an act of kindness for their priest, yet even they were far from divining how much the overworked pastor's

mind was soothed whenever he was able to accept their pressing invitation to accompany them in an evening ride.

"It was just such a night as this," said Father Casey, half turning from his place beside Mr. Murtaugh towards the story-hungry children in the rear seats; "We all stood leaning on the deck rail in silence long after the sun had set amid that golden splendor that I have seen nowhere except on or near the Mediterranean —"

Bang! ! ! Like the crack of a rifle it punctuated Father Casey's story. Mrs. Murtaugh whitened; Eileen screamed; and Bobby gave such a jump that his naughty big sister afterwards protested that he would have gone bodily through the automobile top if she had not held fast to his coat tail.

"Con — found it! A blowout in that new tire!" cried Mr. Murtaugh in a rage, as he swerved to the side of the road and brought the car to a sudden stop.

"Aw, papa, you have to go to confession after saying that bad word," pouted Agnes after the entire party had scrambled out into the dusty weeds and stood watching more fortunate motorists whiz by.

"Hush, child," expostulated the mother with an alarmed glance at the spot where her panting better half was frantically wrestling with wrenches and jack-screws. "Don't irritate papa."

"Agnes," said Father Casey, coming to the rescue to keep the children occupied, "when you go to Confession are you obliged to tell that you have used bad words?"

"O, Father, I don't use bad words," cried the little miss in injured tone.

"Come, come, mademoiselle, I don't mean you. My

question refers to people in general — to anybody — Bobby here, for instance."

"Yes, Father," replied Agnes decidedly. "When Bobby goes to Confession he has to tell he used bad words. Yesterday, when the goat butted him he said [whisper]: 'Great Cæsar and balls of fire! ! !'"

"Not too fast now, Miss Agnes," said Father Casey. "Do you remember the answer to this question in the catechism: What sins are we bound to confess?"

"We are bound to confess all our mortal sins, but it is well to confess also our venial sins," sang out Agnes with mechanical precision.

"Correct!" declared Father Casey. "You know your catechism, why don't you apply it? Mortal sins are the only sins we are bound to confess. Not all bad words are mortal sins by any means. Therefore you were wrong, Miss Agnes, when you said we are bound to confess all the bad words we have used. Here Bobby, is one for you. Why is it that we are bound to confess only mortal sins and not venial sins?"

"Because God has given us other means for obtaining pardon of venial sins."

"That is the right answer. But here is a difficulty: are there not also other ways of obtaining pardon for mortal sins — an act of perfect contrition for instance?"

"Ye — yes," said Bobby, scratching his puzzled head.

"I will help you, my boy. Mortal sins can be forgiven outside of Confession only if we have an explicit or implicit intention of telling them in our next Confession; while venial sins can be forgiven outside of Confession even if we have no intention whatsoever of confessing them. That is why we are bound to con-

fess our mortal sins, but not our venial sins. Likewise, because, even though we die without having our venial sins forgiven we can be saved; but we shall be obliged to atone for them in purgatory. On the other hand if we die with a single unforgiven mortal sin on our souls we shall be sent to hell forever. But now, since we are not bound to confess our venial sins, why did Agnes say that it is good for us to do so, eh, Bobby?"

But Bobby had run over to his father to offer a suggestion for mending the damaged tire. Eileen, with ladylike politeness, essayed an answer.

"Because, Father, we are more sure of having them forgiven if we tell them in Confession."

"Yes, and because," added Father Casey, "it is sometimes hard for us to decide whether a certain sin is mortal or venial, and also because if we confess at least our more grievous or more frequent venial sins, the confessor will be able to advise us so that these venial sins do not lead us into mortal sins. But always remember, we are not bound to confess our venial sins, and therefore, even if we would keep them back on purpose it would not make our Confession bad. Here is another question from the catechism for Agnes: When is our Confession entire?"

"Our Confession is entire when we tell the number and kinds of our mortal sins together with the circumstances which change their nature."

"Suppose," continued Father Casey, "a boy confesses thus: I committed five sins against the fifth commandment. Would his Confession be entire?" This to Bobby, who had returned from his father's side with an alacrity that showed that his suggestion had not been thankfully received.

"His Confession would not be entire, Father, because he did not tell the kind of his sins; there are several different kinds of sins against the fifth commandment."

"For instance?"

"Anger, hatred, murder, bodily injury, and — and —"

"Very well! Here is another boy that confesses: I hated several people. Is his Confession entire?"

"No, Father, because he did not tell the number of his mortal sins."

"Suppose he does not know the number?"

"Then," said Bobby, "he must tell it as near as he can."

"How can he do that? If he does not know the number, how can he come near it except by saying that he did the thing several times?"

"If he is not sure, but thinks he did it from eight to twelve times, he can say I did it about ten times, and that would be all right."

"Yes," answered the priest, "and if he could not even come that close to the number, he should at least try to say about how often in the month, week, or day, he had committed the sin. The priest would remember how long the boy said it was since his last confession and thus would have a fair idea as to how often the sin had been committed. Above all, when people say, I have committed this sin about ten times, they should make it clear to the confessor whether they mean ten times a week, ten times a month, or ten times altogether since their last confession. Now for another point; Agnes said we must tell not only the number and kind of our mortal sins, but also the circumstances which

change their nature. What on earth does that mean? Does it mean that you must tell whether the weather was clear or foggy, whether you were wearing a pink dress or a blue one?" [This for the benefit of Eileen, who was taking an inventory of the garb of the occupants of machines that whizzed by with exasperating frequency.]

"No, Father, it doesn't mean that."

"Then what does it mean?"

"Father, I don't know."

"To tell the circumstances that change the nature of the sin, means to tell anything connected with the bad deed that makes it an altogether different sin. Here is an example: a thief comes to Confession and says, 'I stole twenty dollars on two different occasions.' Does he tell that mortal sin according to its kind and number?"

"Yes, Father."

"But now, suppose he broke into a church in order to steal that money. There is a circumstance that changes the nature of the sin and makes it a sacrilegious theft. Or again: a boy comes to Confession and says, 'I struck a man once.' But the man he struck was his own father, or a priest. Here is a circumstance that changes the nature of the sin, and therefore he is bound to mention that circumstance."

"Father," said Eileen, "I'm always worried for fear I may have left out some sin in Confession."

"Did you leave it out on purpose?"

"O, no, Father! I would not do that, for I know that would be a fearful sacrilege, and none of my sins would be forgiven. But I am afraid I may have forgotten something."

"Well, suppose you did forget some mortal sin, wasn't it forgiven anyway in the Confession in which you forgot to tell it?"

"Ye — Yes, Father, I guess so."

"Of course it was," said Father Casey. "Then what are you worrying about? If you remember the sin, you must tell it the next time you go to Confession. If you never recall it again, you never have to confess it, and when you come to die you will go straight to heaven if that is the only obstacle. Neither are you obliged to go examining your past confessions to see if you did not perhaps forget some mortal sin or unintentionally confessed it without giving the correct name, number, or circumstances."

"I see now that I am foolish to worry for fear I may have forgotten some mortal sin. But Father, why must I tell a forgotten sin if I remember it, the next time I go to Confession, since it is already forgiven?"

"You must tell it, not in order to have it forgiven, but because Christ has given us a strict command to tell all our mortal sins in Confession. In the same manner, if you make an act of perfect contrition, all your mortal sins are forgiven on the instant, but you still have the obligation of telling them the next time you go to Confession — not to have them forgiven, because they are forgiven already — but because Christ has commanded you to confess them."

"If I forget a mortal sin in my Confession Saturday night and think of it next morning, can I go to Communion, or must I first go to Confession?"

"If you had been paying as much attention to me as to how the women are dressed who are speeding by in these automobiles, you would not need to ask that question. I said: If you forget to confess a sin, all

you need is to tell it in your next Confession. You may go to Communion a dozen times in the meantime if you wish — you need not go to Confession just to tell that sin. But whenever you do go to Confession you must tell. That's all."

"After all, Confession isn't so hard, if we only understand it rightly," said Mrs. Murtaugh with a sigh of relief.

"Indeed it is not," replied Father Casey. "Our Divine Saviour invented the sacrament of Confession to show His love and mercy, not to torture and torment us, as some scrupulous persons seem to believe."

A troubled expression was still visible on Eileen's face even through her automobile veil.

"Eileen, child, what's the matter?" queried the priest.

"Father, it always worried me to think about Confession. Last Sunday you preached about superstition and you told us what superstitious practices are mortal sins. Now I am sure I did some of these things when I was a little girl, and I never confessed them, because I did not know they were wrong. I dread the thought of going back so many years to examine my conscience regarding those actions."

"You don't have to confess those actions. How often have I told you that three things are required to constitute a mortal sin — serious matter, sufficient reflection, and full consent. You did not know you were doing wrong at the time, therefore you did not have sufficient reflection; therefore you did not commit a mortal sin. And since these actions were not mortal sins for you, you were not obliged to confess them. If you were to commit them again, now that you know that they are mortal sins, it would be quite a

different story. I see your father is gathering up his tools. In a minute he will be telling us to 'pile in.' Don't forget what I have told you during the past twenty minutes: First, you are not bound to tell your venial sins in Confession, though it is highly commendable to do so. Even if you keep them back on purpose, it does not make your Confession bad. Secondly, you must tell all your mortal sins — you must tell their kind and number as nearly as you can and add any circumstances that change the nature of these sins. Thirdly, if you keep back a mortal sin on purpose, your confession is bad; not a single one of your sins is forgiven, and furthermore, you commit a new sin, the horrible sin of sacrilege. But if you forget a mortal sin in Confession, it is nevertheless forgiven, and the only obligation you have is to tell it the next time you go to Confession if it comes to your mind. If it never comes to your mind again, you never need to worry about it. Fourthly, if you did something bad without knowing it was a mortal sin, you did not contract the guilt of mortal sin, and therefore you are not bound to confess that action, even though, later in life, you learned that it was, in itself, seriously wrong —"

"Mamma," whispered Eileen, "did you notice that woman?"

"What woman? The one with the drab felt hat and embroidered scarf and pleated waist and soiled kid gloves? No, I didn't notice her. Why?"

"Well, may God forgive me for trying to tell anything serious to a woman while she has another woman's dress to look at," said Father Casey.

WHY HE SAYS THE BREVIARY

You would have known it at a glance — they were bound for the State Fair. The whole family was in evidence, pa and ma and Silas — and entirely too much in evidence was Miss Amanthy, who had for the first time donned the latest style of scanty gown, and whose natural modesty kept torturing her with the uncomfortable feeling that she had left her room in a hurry and forgotten something — in evidence too, was "Baby" Hiram, whenever he was not trying to crawl under the seat and get at the lunch while his elders were discussing the crops along the track. Hiram had been the "Baby" for so long that he was now a great clumsy youth of fourteen.

The crammed lunch basket was at last produced and legally opened. The seats were turned, and Hiram had to change places with Amanthy who got dizzy when she rode with her back toward the engine; but the leg of spring chicken that fell to his share did not taste half so sweet as its mate which he had clandestinely devoured a half hour previously. While pa was taking long, sounding draughts from the bottle of cold tea, his head thrown back and his eye roving about, reviewing his fellow passengers, he stopped short and pointed to a man a few seats ahead, in black suit and Roman collar, intently perusing a little black book with gilt edges.

"The consarned hypocrite!" he sputtered, "readin'

the Bible in public; pretendin' he loves it! And he won't let the people get as much as a peep at it. He knows mighty well that if they read the Bible their eyes will be opened to the wickedness of Romish superstition and they'll renounce the scarlet woman seated on the seven hills. The consarned hypocrite!"

"That's not a Bible, pa," contradicted Silas, who had knocked about a bit and had seen enough of the world outside the bigoted, little backwoods settlement where he was born to be a trifle ashamed of his father's narrowness. "It's just a book the priests have to read when they ride on the train."

"What's it about?" queried Amanthy.

"I don't know," replied Silas; "sermons or something, I guess. Or, may be, it's the rules for them drills they go through in the church, with all them funny clothes on."

"I think, Silas, it's something worse than that," said ma solemnly. "They wouldn't be reading the same book all the time to learn sermons or rules. I'd be mighty surprised if it hadn't something to do with the black art. I seen priests looking at a person and moving their lips while they held the little black book closed. They were repeating some spell or charm to get the person in their power.— Amanthy, you put a leetle too much cinnamon in this apple sass."

"Ah, ma," persisted Silas, "the priests you saw doing that were just trying to learn something by heart that they read in the book. Ask that man behind you about the priest's book. He looks like an Irishman, and all the Irish are Catholics."

"Mister," she said, tugging at the coat sleeve of the man in question, "what's that book about that your priests are always reading?"

"The book is it?" said he in a deep, rich brogue. "Why, that's his Office."

"But what's it about?"

"Shure, ma'am, it's Latin. You wouldn't understand it at all," he said, trying to evade the question he could not answer.

"Well, even if it is Latin, it has to be about something that can be told in English, don't it?"

"Shure, ma'am, ask the priest. He'll be plazed —"

"Ask the priest," broke in pa fretfully. "That's what you Catholics always say. Ask the priest. Why don't you learn something about your religion yourselves?"

But Pat (we shall presume that was his name) was determined not to let slip the chance of enlightening these "haythens." Accordingly he approached the priest.

"Would yer reverence mind explainin' to these people what the Office is about. They're dyin' to know." [Then, under his breath]: "They're Prodestans."

Much to their discomfiture, Father Timothy Casey, for such was the name of the priest, rose and took the vacant seat opposite the family bound for the State Fair.

"The Office or Breviary," he began, "is a form of prayer which every priest is obliged under pain of mortal sin to recite daily. It consists of four books like this one — a special book for each of the four seasons of the year. The portion assigned for each day requires from an hour to an hour and a half in the recitation. This daily assignment generally consists of a short life of the saint whose feast is being celebrated that day, a short selection from the writings of St.

Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Chrysostom, or some other great Doctor of the Church, and several of the most beautiful and striking passages of the Bible. To this is added a certain number of recitations of the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Glory be to the Father, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, and other admirable prayers."

"An hour and a half is a purty considerable lot of time to waste every day," growled pa. "But I reckon you priests have to find some way of filling up your time."

"Well," returned Father Casey, "I'll give you a sample of my day's work, and you can judge how much I have to worry about filling up my time. I rise at five, devote an hour and a half to meditation, Mass, and thanksgiving, go through the morning mail, answer sometimes a dozen business letters, teach catechism in the school for an hour, meet callers at all times, oversee repair work in church, school, hall, and house, attend to sick calls that come to me by day or night, devote several hours to preparing my sermons, instruct a few converts, and look up the poor of the parish and try to get help for them, or the black sheep, and try to bring them back to the fold. That is why I have to take advantage of every spare moment even while riding on the train, to say my Office, instead of reciting it at my leisure in the church, as I would prefer to do. It is only now that I realize that the easiest time of my life was when I was a boy plowing corn on the western prairie."

"Then why do you waste an hour and a half every day reading that book?" queried pa, who began to warm to the priest when he learned that he had been brought up on the farm.

"You see, my friend, the Church has made a strict law obliging us to say the Office, and we have no choice but to obey. Besides, it doesn't exactly seem to be a waste of time to spend a while every day of our lives reading the Word of God, the lives of the greatest men and women that ever lived, and the writings of the master minds of God's Church. Such daily reading elevates and ennobles the mind of the priest and makes him better fitted for his work of saving souls. Then, too, the Office is a prayer — the very best form of prayer, for it is nearly all taken from the Bible. And we all need to pray if we want God to help us to do what is right. The priest needs prayer more than any one else, because he has harder duties to perform and stronger temptations to overcome. On the day that he is ordained a sub-deacon, he takes a solemn vow of chastity, that is, he makes a sacred promise to God never to marry and never to do, say, or think anything contrary to the holy virtue of purity. At the very moment that he makes this vow the Church puts into his hands the Office, and commands him to say that prayer every day of his life, in order to obtain from God the strength necessary to keep these difficult obligations."

"Be-utiful!" sighed Amanthy.

"The really beautiful part of the explanation is yet to come," said Father Casey. "I have so far spoken only of the personal benefit which the priest derives from the daily recitation of the Office. By far the principal benefit of the Office is that derived by every member of the Church of God, for the priest recites the Office in his capacity of official of the Church of God, in the name of all the members of that Church."

"Almighty God created us all," said Father Casey, settling down to explanation. "To Him we are in-

debted for our body and our soul, our life, our strength, and every faculty that we possess. It is simply and solely by the power of God that we think and speak and act — to Him we are indebted for each breath that we draw, for each beat of our heart. Therefore, by a strict law of justice, every human being should give everything back to God. We should give our time and our life to God in a continual service of praise and prayer. Since we cannot do this, the Church of God, of which we are members, performs this duty in our name, and she performs it by means of her priests. It is for this end she commands them to say the Office. But since even the priest cannot pray continually, she commands him to divide the Office into eight distinct parts, distributing them over the twenty-four hours of the day in such a manner as to represent as nearly as possible the perpetual sacrifice of praise and prayer which we owe to God. These eight parts of the Office are: Matins, which should be recited at midnight; Lauds, at dawn; Prime, at sunrise, which used to be called the first hour of the day; Tierce, at nine, which used to be called the third hour; Sext, at noon, which used to be called the sixth hour; None, at three, which used to be called the ninth hour; Vespers, at sunset; and Compline, at bedtime. It is true that priests engaged in parish work like myself cannot observe these hours in practice, but we come as near to it as we can. However, there are thousands of priests in the world who meet daily in monastery chapels, in churches, or cathedrals, and recite, or even chant, the Office nearly at the hours I have indicated. Thus you see that when the priest recites the Office it is not principally for himself, but for all the members of God's Church living and dead. Neither does the value of this prayer de-

pend upon the holiness of the priest who recites it. It is not his prayer; it is the prayer of the Church. He is reciting the prayer of the Church, in the name of the Church, as a minister or official of the Church. In other words, it is the Church that prays; the priest is only her mouthpiece. We know that the prayer of the Church is bound to be most pleasing to Christ, for she is the Mystical Body of Christ, and Christ is her Head; she is the spotless Bride of Christ, and Christ is her Spouse. Therefore, when she prays, Christ will certainly grant her prayer. From this you can see the unspeakable value of the Office, the perpetual prayer which the Church offers to Christ by the mouth of her priest for all her members living and dead."

"For the future," continued Father Casey, rising, "whenever you see a Catholic priest reading a little black book with gilt edges, you will know that Christ's Church is offering to God the perpetual sacrifice of praise and supplication in the name of all her members; that one of the most powerful prayers ever uttered by human lips is ascending to the throne of God on behalf of men."

"I think," said ma, "that our ministers ought to say the Office too. Pa, I want you to bring up the question at the next meeting of the elders in the Presbytery."

"My good woman, don't be too hasty about imposing this obligation on your ministers. I fancy that it would be most inconvenient to put the baby to sleep and recite the Office at the same time," said Father Casey.

"SIN NO MORE"

"Pastorem oportet cognoscere oves et corripere." (A pastor has the strict duty of knowing his flock and correcting the erring members.) Well Father Casey remembered from seminary days that principle and the emphatic manner in which the old professor had insisted upon it.

Easter time was drawing to a close. He had looked up all the backsliders and warned them not to neglect the sacraments — all except Mrs. Q. Reginald Wainwright; and how thoroughly distasteful was the task of approaching her! It had been easy enough, for example, to track Mike Dobbin until he had him in a corner and to give him such a lecture, full of severity and motherly tenderness, as brought Mike, reluctant but repentant, to Confession the next Saturday night. But Mrs. Q. Reginald Wainwright — to correct her was a task of quite a different order, and he heartily wished that it were over and done with. He remembered when she was plain (O, so very plain!) Mary Anne Duffy, freckle-faced, snub-nosed Mary Anne Duffy — none too clean and not a bit worried about it. That, however, was years ago — long before she trapped the pompous Reginald and became, as the neighbors put it, "some pumpkins."

Wainwright had never positively tried to prevent her from practicing her religion. He was far too highly polished to do such a vulgar thing. He even accompanied her to mass on Christmas, Easter, and a few

other occasions, when he considered it good form to visit a church of some kind. Of course, he could not be expected always to restrain the sneer or the cutting remark that came naturally to his lips at the mention of some particularly distasteful "mediæval mummery"— Confession, for instance. However, it was not this that weaned Mary Anne — I beg pardon, Mrs. Q. Reginald — gradually away from the belief and practice of her holy faith. No; it was rather the spirit of worldliness, naturalism, which saturated her husband through and through and pervaded the very atmosphere of the house where he lived. This life was everything; the life to come nothing. Creature comforts and the means to secure them constituted the highest good. All suffering, even bodily discomfort, must be shunned at every cost. And then, since even the unbeliever must have some belief, he salved his conscience with the watery dogma, "It matters not whether we profess any religion provided we lead honest lives." [As if the life of that man could be called honest who neglects to pay his first debt, his debt to the God that made him.] This pleasant and soothing doctrine of Q. Reginald Wainwright proved acceptable to such a sensual creature as his wife. She gradually adopted it in word and work, albeit she had not ceased to call herself a Catholic — an *enlightened* Catholic, she would have been careful to explain.

"Have I any obligation of trying to induce her to make her Easter Confession, when I am fairly certain the confessor will find her unfit for absolution," Father Casey had querulously asked himself a dozen times, and a dozen times the answer had taken the form of a principle learned in the seminary: "Pastorem oportet cognoscere oves et corripere." That is why he found

himself this bright spring evening ringing the Wainwright door bell and fervently hoping there was no one at home. No such luck! He was ushered in, and the welcome he received instantly changed spring to midwinter. He took a quiet inventory of the room while master and mistress bade him welcome. [Welcome! Ah, what an empty word thou canst sometimes be on polite lips!] Everything bespoke ease and luxury. No children to track up the glassy varnished floors or upset the bric-a-brac. Only a poodle that received care and coddling enough to go around twice in any good-sized family. For all her grandeur, there was a weary, hunted look in the eyes of Mrs. Q. Reginald Wainwright, which he had never seen there when she was harum-scarum Mary Anne.

In the face of covert opposition on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright, and open hostility on the part of the poodle, the priest approached the question of Easter duty.

"Dear me," drawled the lady, "are we so near the end of Easter time? The days pass so quickly, Father Casey, don't you know!"

The master of the house was nettled.

"It's no wonder, sir," he said, "that the Catholic Church cannot hold her intelligent members if she persists in saddling such burdens upon them. How can they fail to see the absurdity of Confession — the absurdity of saying that a confirmed sot, for instance, who would sell his very God for whiskey, is made spotless as an innocent child, if, in a lucid moment between two drunks, a priest mumbles over him that hocus-pocus, presto-chango stuff that you call absolution!"

"That would be absurd indeed!" said Father Casey. "Naturally I, a priest, know the doctrines of the Cath-

olic Church fairly well, and I have never found that she teaches any such thing. The Catholic Sacrament of Confession does not consist merely in the words of the priest, but in the contrition of the person confessing as well. Just as it would be foolish to call that performance the Catholic Sacrament of Baptism wherein the priest would say: 'I baptize thee,' without having any water to pour upon the head of the person to be baptized, so, too, is it equally foolish to call that performance the Catholic Sacrament of Confession where the priest would say, 'I absolve thee,' over a person who narrated his sins without contrition."

"That gives me but little light," growled Wainwright. "What do I know about your contrition?"

"Mary Anne," commanded Father Casey peremptorily, "tell him what contrition is."

Mrs. Wainwright was taken off her feet by being addressed in this way, and before she realized it, she had rattled off the well-known Act of Contrition.

"You did not tell us what contrition is; you simply repeated a formula of words by means of which contrition may be externally manifested. Mr. Wainwright," he continued, turning to that gentleman, "since I have come into your house to urge your wife to perform the Catholic duty of Confession, it is right that I should make clear to you what the Catholic sacrament of Confession really is, for it is too evident that you do not know. Confession is a sacrament instituted by Christ whereby a Christian who confesses his sins with true contrition is freed from the guilt of those sins by the absolution of the priest. You understand every word of this definition except 'absolution' and 'contrition.' Absolution is a liberative sen-

tence pronounced by the priest in virtue of the judicial authority he received in ordination as a lawful successor of the first judges of sin ordained by Christ. Contrition is detestation and sorrow of heart for the sin committed, coupled with a firm determination not to sin again. Let me point out to you the qualities that this contrition must possess and without which the Catholic sacrament of Confession cannot exist. Had you been better informed on this point, you would never have made the statement which you made a moment ago, and which, to a Catholic, is nothing short of blasphemy.

"The first quality required for contrition," continued Father Casey, "is that it be *interior*. Your wife has just repeated the Act of Contrition which Catholics are accustomed to recite when going to Confession. However, the recitation of the Act of Contrition is not sufficient, neither is it absolutely necessary. As I told you, contrition is sorrow and detestation for sin, and you know that sorrow and detestation for anything is in the heart and not on the lips. If a Catholic would go to Confession and recite the Act of Contrition without having real sorrow and detestation for sin in his heart, that would be no sacrament of Confession at all."

"Well, Father," interrupted Mrs. Wainwright, who was so far forgetting herself as to become interested in the discussion, "if you forget to say the Act of Contrition, your Confession is no good either, is it?"

"Perfectly good, my child, provided you have true sorrow in your heart. Of course, this sorrow must be manifested to the priest in some way; but the mere fact that you are kneeling there accusing yourself of your sins is sufficient manifestation. It is implicitly

saying 'I am sorry for my sins.' The priest will be satisfied with that unless he has reason to think that you are not telling the truth."

"Do you mean to tell me," queried Wainwright, "that all the old topers you round up Easter time have in their heart a true sorrow and detestation for ever having emptied a whiskey bottle! Bah!"

"I mean to tell you nothing of the kind. Neither do I mean," persisted the priest, aiming a home thrust at this sleek Pharisee, "to say that every man that has taken an unfair advantage of his competitors in business, nor every man that has violated the laws of God and nature in marriage, has in his heart a true sorrow and detestation for having committed these sins. But I do mean to say that if he has not this sorrow his Confession is worthless. If the Confessor sees he has not this sorrow and is unable to awaken it in him he must send him away without absolution. If the confessor gives him absolution, thinking he has this sorrow, while in reality he has not, that absolution will not be ratified in heaven."

Wainwright fidgetted in his chair. Then, feeling it was his turn to say something:

"Sorrow is a very relative thing," he muttered; "Mike Duggan may be sorry for his last drunk when he thinks of the night in the calaboose and the fine the next morning. But he is glad of the rousing time he had; he is smacking his lips still over the taste of the fine whiskey Grogan bought for him that night. The net result will be more joy than sorrow over the drunk. Still he can truthfully say that he is sorry and so slip by your contrition test. Sorrow is a very relative thing."

"There is nothing relative about the sorrow neces-

sary for a valid Confession," retorted Father Casey quickly. "It must be *supreme,* otherwise it is useless."

"Supreme? What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that the sorrow for sin, required for a valid Confession, must outweigh the sorrow for any other evil."

"Then," laughed Wainwright, "you priests had just as well shut up shop. Wakes and funerals have got your goat. I'll bet a plug hat that four-fifths of the men that bawl when wife or child dies, don't shed a tear when going to Confession."

"You win, Mr. Wainwright; but your argument proves nothing. Sorrow is an act of the will, not an exhibition of feelings. Ask these men whether they are fully prepared to commit the sin again in order to bring that dear one back to life. Just ask them; you will be surprised to hear nearly every one of them say, 'No, by the grace of God, I wouldn't. There is the real test which shows they are more sorry for their sins than for any other evil that ever befell them, even if they do not shed a single tear over these sins."

The priest paused a moment, then continued:

"There is nothing really difficult about this for a man of faith. The sorrow required for a valid Confession must be *supernatural* in its origin and supernatural in its motive. Supernatural in its origin — that is, it must proceed from the grace of God; supernatural in its motive — he must be sorry, for example, principally because by his sin he has offended the infinitely perfect God, or because he has lost his right to heaven and rendered himself deserving of the eternal pains of hell. I do not say that he cannot be sorry at the same time on account of some natural motive, for instance, because by his sin he lost his health or his

reputation, but he must be sorry principally for some supernatural motive, and, I repeat, this is by no means difficult for a man of faith, for one who has a vivid realization of the existence of God and of the eternity of joy that awaits the just and the eternity of torments that awaits the wicked."

"Yes," said Wainwright wearily, "no doubt anyone in the morbidly retrospective mood your Confession seems to postulate, will easily manage to unearth some absurd blunder, or, as you would say, some sin, that he heartily regrets. Still I don't see —"

"Our sacrament of Confession is not satisfied if the sinner regrets some sin; he must regret them all. One of the necessary conditions of Contrition is that it be *universal.* I can imagine a man who had offered you three deadly insults, coming to ask pardon, and saying, 'Mr. Wainwright, I remember that I deliberately insulted you on three different occasions. I can honestly say that I am sorry for two of these insults.' I can imagine a man speaking thus to you but I cannot imagine you forgiving him and readmitting him to your intimate friendship until he makes atonement also for that third insult. Now, when anyone commits a grievous sin, he offers a deadly insult to Almighty God. When he receives the sacrament of Confession, God pardons him. But God cannot pardon him and therefore he cannot really receive the sacrament of Confession until he is sorry for every one of his grievous sins. This doctrine about Confession may be new to you, Mr. Wainwright, but it is thoroughly understood by all fairly well instructed Catholics. They are perfectly aware that there is no use in their trying to get absolution unless they are sorry for all their sins. When we see certain Catholics shirking Confession, it

is not uncharitable to suspect that they have a pet sin nestling in their hearts which they love more than they love God or their immortal souls."

Mrs. Wainwright was clearly growing nervous. She made a feeble attempt to change the subject. However, her husband felt that the enemy occupied far more of his territory than was conducive towards a favorable treaty of peace, and accordingly he essayed another attack.

"Your whole line-up is altogether too technical, Fath — sir. You boast that your Church is the Church of the poor. How is old Mrs. Mulligan across the street going to remember all these qualities of contrition when she goes to Confession?"

"Mr. Wainwright, a chemist's scientific statement enumerating the qualities of true gold is above the comprehension of the uneducated; there is, however, a test that all can understand. You know what it is."

"The fire test," said Wainwright.

"The fire test for contrition," said Father Casey, "is its effect on one's future conduct. He who is firmly determined, by the help of grace, to die rather than offend God by another mortal sin — he has true contrition — contrition with all the qualities I have described. He who is not so determined, has not. This constitutes the last condition of contrition — it must be *efficacious.*"

No further objections being offered, Father Casey continued:

"For the future, Mr. Wainwright, remember this: There is no such thing as the Catholic sacrament of Confession without genuine contrition, and no contrition can pass as genuine unless it is: first, *interior,* in the heart and not merely on the lips; secondly, *su-*

preme, a sorrow for sin greater than the sorrow for any other evil; thirdly, *supernatural,* inspired by grace and regret for having offended God, lost heaven, or deserved hell; fourthly, *universal,* embracing every grievous sin without any exception; fifthly, *efficacious,* coupled with a firm determination to avoid sin and therefore to adopt the means necessary for avoiding it. Remember this for the future, and you will never again say, as you said to-day, that the Catholic sacrament of Confession is a superstitious performance which pretends to make a confirmed toper as spotless as an innocent child by muttering over him the hocus-pocus presto-chango stuff called absolution during a lucid interval between two drunks."

When Father Casey took his leave, there were few words lost in invitations to call again. However, the poodle was the only one adequately to express the sentiments of the family, for he barked long and savagely after the departing priest.

HELL

"None o' yer lip, these gur-r-ls have a permit for a picnic in this section of Woodland Park. They don't want the likes o' ye upholstering the benches. Go on! Along wid ye, or I'll run ye in!"

"Ya-as you will" [and when he was safely out of reach] "like hell!"

"Ou-ou-ou-ou!" chorused the girls who were, — or pretended to be shocked at the tramp's ambiguous simile.

"Sillies!" sneered Sylvia St. Claire, "why should you pay any more attention to that word than if he had mentioned Utopia, Wonderland, or any other imaginary place?"

"Imaginary place!" Hannah Callagee fairly screamed, "you don't mean to say hell —"

"Hannah Callagee, you cuss worse words than that Gloomy Gus that was giving back talk to the copper," teased Letty Hoyne, casting an apprehensive glance over her shoulder to make sure that her own slangy verbiage had not been overheard by Sister Caritas.

"Novel as the statement may sound to your benighted ears, I do mean to say that hell is an imaginary place," calmly dogmatized Sylvia.

Sylvia St. Claire was the only child of parents whose religion was pleasure and who, after systematically spoiling Sylvia until she was eighteen, had sent her to the Sisters to have all theological and moral virtues in-

stilled into her heart in the course of one or two scholastic years.

"The Church of God teaches that there is a hell, and the Church of God cannot teach a lie," said Hannah.

"If you Catholics want to manufacture a place of eternal torments to go to after you die, you are welcome. But you forget that I am not a member of your Church."

The queenly Sylvia, having thus quashed the unwelcome truth, was turning away when Hannah cried:

"The Bible says so, and I hope you believe the Word of God."

"Whether I believe the Bible or not matters little. If you knew the Greek and Oriental languages in which the Bible is written, you would know that it says nothing of the sort. The word in the Bible that is translated by our English word, hell, is nothing else than the mysterious land beyond the grave."

Sister Caritas had not failed to catch floating fragments of the conversation, and had hastened to send up her heaviest guns in the person of Father Casey.

"Perfidious Sylvia," laughed Father Casey, "have a heart! How coolly you permit us Catholics to consign ourselves to the lower regions! And as for yourself, may I ask where you are planning on sojourning in your life after death, or do you expect to have your 'be-all and your end-all' here, like poor Fido, whom the girls tearfully consigned to his last resting place yesterday?"

"My sojourn will be beyond the azure dome — in heaven," declaimed Sylvia with a tragic gesture taken from the movies.

"How do you know there is a heaven?"

"The Bible says so," Sylvia answered promptly.

"Then, if the Bible says there is a hell, I suppose you will believe that too."

"Yes," replied Sylvia, "but the Bible does not say —"

"Let us see. The Bible says, 'If thy eye scandalize thee —' Bridget, what does the Bible say about scandal?"

"If thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life lame or maimed, than having two hands and two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire," recited Bridget.

"Now, Sylvia," continued the priest, "you possess such remarkably acute intelligence that you will see at a glance that the 'everlasting fire' and the 'hell fire' here referred to do not mean the land beyond the grave. They rather mean one of the two states in that 'mysterious land.' One is the state of *life* or happiness in union with God, whither it is a great blessing to go, even at the cost of losing an eye or a hand. The other is the state of *suffering* or separation from God, whither it would be a curse to go, even in order to preserve both eyes or both hands."

"Our Lord does not mean real fire, does he, Father?" queried Myrtle Maze.

"I think, Myrtle, when Our Lord speaks, we can safely give Him credit for meaning what He says."

"But He cannot mean real fire, otherwise it could not be everlasting," interrupted Myrtle. "There is not fuel enough to keep even the smallest fire burning forever."

Myrtle Maze, one of the Catholic boarders, must not be mistaken for an abnormally profound thinker. She was simply repeating a passage from the last book which she and Sylvia had smuggled in and read on the sly. For, be it remembered, a rotten apple is not always made good by being placed beside a sound apple. Sometimes the process is reversed.

What Father Casey wished to reply was that Myrtle needed a spanking more than a counter-argument. What he did reply was:

"If hell fire were the same as the fire of this world, your difficulty would merit consideration. However, it is quite a different fire, because it was created by Almighty God for quite a different purpose. God created the fire of this world to be of service to His children. It cannot give pain to a disembodied soul, neither can it burn without consuming the material on which it feeds. On the other hand, God created hell fire to punish the stubborn reprobate even while his soul is separated from his body and also to burn without consuming. Therefore the fire of hell is altogether different from the fire of this world — altogether different from the fire of which we have any knowledge. Yet, remember, that does not prevent it from being a very real fire. However, the nature of the fire of hell is a secondary question, we are discussing the existence of hell. Let us hear more from Sylvia. You know the story of Dives and Lazarus, Sylvia. What does the Bible say about them?"

"It says," answered Sylvia, with an uncomfortable feeling that her trenches were being undermined, "that Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom and that Dives died and was buried in hell, and

that Dives was suffering from thirst in the fire and asked Lazarus for a drop of water, but that there was a great chasm between them —"

"Oho! then hell cannot mean the 'mysterious land beyond the grave,' otherwise Dives and Lazarus would both have been there, for both had died. But Lazarus was not there. An impassable chasm separated him from that place. In fact, hell is there described as the exact opposite to the place where Lazarus was. But Lazarus was in a place of everlasting happiness, therefore Dives was in a place of endless torments — the place which is justly called in English, hell."

"So a body can know as much of Oriental languages as Sylvia and still believe the eternal truths," broke in spiteful Bridget.

"Yes," replied Father Casey, "and Sylvia and all of us can learn that by studying the Bible without a guide as she has done we can most easily be led into error. When God gave us the Bible, containing the things He wants us to believe and do, He took care to guard us against these errors by giving us a living authority with a divine commission to explain the Bible. That living authority is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that there is a place of torments where they, who stubbornly adhere to mortal sin even in their dying moments, will be tormented forever. Therefore we know on God's authority that there is a hell."

"But it seems so unreasonable," urged Sylvia.

"That is unreasonable which is opposed to right reason. Anything that the vast majority of human beings, possessed of right reason, have believed in all lands and all ages, cannot be opposed to right reason. But history shows that the vast majority of human

beings have always believed in hell. Therefore the belief is not unreasonable."

"God is too good to send anyone to hell," persisted Sylvia doggedly.

"The fact that God is good does not prevent Him from punishing the evil-doer. I suppose that your parents were good, yet, if they were, they did not spare the shingle when their little Sylvia needed it."

"They certainly could have used it more than they did — and to good effect," broke in Bridget.

Miss Sylvia quite ignored Bridget's uncharitable remark in her effort to remember the next argument in her book against hell. Suddenly she hit upon it.

"The punishment inflicted on us by a good father or mother is medicinal — it is intended to correct our faults and make us good. But hell, as Catholics imagine it, will torture the sinner forever but never make him better."

"Not changing the subject," said Father Casey, "but I understand there is a strict rule in the academy where you girls are studying, according to which any girl that steals away from the grounds alone will be immediately expelled. I understand that all good fathers and mothers highly approve of this rule. Is this a medicinal punishment? Will it make the girl that is expelled a better girl?"

"No, but it will scare the wits out of the others," cried Bridget.

"Yes," continued Father Casey, "and prevent them from making fatal mistakes. It may seem hard on the guilty one that is expelled, but the common good is at stake. And the common good always takes precedence over the individual good. So, too, when God condemns the stubborn reprobate to eternal suffering

in hell, it strikes fear into others and saves them from the misfortune of losing sight of the high and noble end for which they were created."

"Nature's nobleman serves his Maker through love and not through fear!" Sylvia did not forget to adorn this deep thought with another moving picture gesture.

"Was it love or fear that made you stop cheating in exams when Sister Caritas caught you?" questioned spiteful little Bridget.

"Nature's noblemen and noblewomen are made and not born," said Father Casey. "Every one has good inclinations; every one has evil inclinations, too — even Sylvia here, otherwise she would not have stooped to such a dishonorable action as cheating in exams. These good inclinations are developed and these evil inclinations repressed through a happy blending of love and fear. One that knows human nature intimately will understand that there are moments of passion in the life of almost all persons when the love of God is powerless to restrain them. If they did not fear hell, they would give themselves up to the most shameful sins. But the fear of hell restrains them. In their fear they turn to God for help. Thus they learn to know God better and better until the love of God becomes the ruling motive of their lives. Thus hell has filled heaven with elect. None have ever served God with a purer love than the saints, and at the same time none have feared hell more than they. Indeed, in the case of many saints, it was the fear of hell that first weaned them away from the empty pleasures of this world and started them upon their life of heroic virtue. How truly Scripture says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'!"

"A girl I knew at home," interrupted Cecelia Darcy, "was always telling me that we ought to serve God through love and not through fear. Well, she ran away with a married man and the man's wife felt so bad about it she went crazy and —"

"Unfortunately, Cecelia, there are too many people in the world to-day a great deal like the girl you mention. They are morally so flabby that they won't stand up and make a manly and persevering fight against their evil inclinations. They intend to keep on committing their pet sins, but the thought of the punishment awaiting them from the just God they have offended makes them uncomfortable. That is why they try to make themselves believe that there is no hell. The slogan: 'Noble natures labor for love alone,' looks grand on paper. In practice it too often works out pretty much the same as with Cecelia's friend. Let the fear of God be struck into such persons by a violent thunderstorm, for instance, and they will see how black and deformed their soul really is, though it looked so angelic under the 'love-alone' treatment. Nobody knows better than the devil how much the fear of hell helps people to behave themselves. That is why he tries so hard to destroy belief in hell. Take any spiritualist medium that is not a fraud, but really assisted by the devil, and you will find that medium will not talk for two minutes without throwing out hints to lead the hearers to doubt the existence or the eternity of hell."

"I do not wish you to think," said Sylvia condescendingly, "that I would have the wrong-doer go unscathed. He must be chastised for his wickedness. That is only just. But he has suffering sufficient in this life. The shame, the confusion he feels, the bitter

reproaches of his own conscience, are punishment enough. The sinner has his hell within his heart."

"My poor Sylvia, experiences of the world will show you that the hell within the sinner's heart is often a very comfortable little hell. If sinners had no fear of punishment in the next world, the hell within their heart would seldom restrain them from perpetrating any crime to which they felt violently impelled. Why, my child, many a pure, holy soul suffers unspeakably more from scruples, from the fear of having displeased God in some indefinite way, than the hardened men and women who have deadened their consciences by habitual sin. If there is no hell except the sufferings of this life, then we have no assurance of escaping hell by leading a virtuous life, and even if we had, such a mild form of hell would be powerless to restrain us at times when we stand most in need of restraint."

"At least," urged Sylvia, "there is no need of making hell last forever in order to strike, what you call, a salutary fear, into the sinner's heart. I believe that, if there is a hell, it will one day come to an end, and then all God's children will be united in the endless bliss of their Father's home."

"Your suppositions, Miss Sylvia, are contradicted by facts. Every day we see men and women who are not restrained from sin even by the belief in an eternal hell; how little they would fear a hell that they know would one day come to an end!"

"But God will not punish us eternally for a sin which took but a moment to commit. There would be no proportion between the crime and the punishment."

"It takes only a moment to commit murder," said Father Casey, "and yet every one admits that lifelong imprisonment is none too strict a punishment for it.

Mortal sin is an infinite offense, for it is a deadly insult offered to the infinite God. Therefore it deserves a punishment without limit. You speak of sin as something momentary. The sins punished in hell are not momentary but perpetual. None are sent to hell except those who have deliberately become enemies of God by mortal sin, and furthermore — mark this well — who have gone on till death stubbornly repulsing every attempt at reconciliation on God's part. Death found their will bad, deformed by mortal sin, at enmity with God. And, in whatever condition death finds their will, in that condition it remains for all eternity. Thus the will of the reprobate is eternally hostile to God and justly merits God's eternal chastisements. Besides, if hell were not everlasting, the hardened reprobate could go on defying God forever. Even while he was mocking God to His face, God would be obliged, at the end of the period assigned for the duration of hell, to lift him up and welcome him among the angels and saints. Think of it, a beastly debauchee like Nero or Caligula, who wallowed in shameful excesses that we dare not even name — think of such a one though he died without a sigh of repentance, though his wicked will be hardened in guilt for all eternity — think of him, admitted to heaven after a temporary sojourn in hell and there placed upon terms of the closest intimacy with a spotless Agnes or Cecelia, nay even with the Blessed Mother of God herself! No, my child, unpleasant truths are truths still. All who have any idea of the fitness of things know that hell exists and will exist forever."

"Then a Catholic must hold that God creates beings whom He foresees (for He foresees everything) will be tortured in hell for all eternity!"

"Yes, He does. And no one can show that there is anything in this action contrary to His divine perfections. It is true that you chose the crudest and most repulsive way of stating the fact. To speak with due respect we should say: God creates beings and gives them the priceless treasure of a free will and offers them the boundless merits purchased for them by the Blood of His own Son. He does this even though He sees that some of them will abuse the gift of free will and reject the divine graces so generously offered them and thus render themselves forever unfit for the company of the blessed in heaven. If God could not create a man whom he foresaw would willfully damn himself if created, then that wicked man, even before he had begun to exist, would be the master, and the great God would be forced to obey him, thus —"

"O sister, sister!" came the clear eager voice of a breathless girl. "The man says we can have coffee for sixty cents a gallon."

A BUTTONHOLE TOO MANY

It had been a hot day in the railroad shops. Since even the offices were sweltering, in spite of their electric fans, their high ceilings, and broad, awning-shaded windows, what must have it been in the furnace rooms!

Owen Cashin had spent the day, not before one of the mahogany tables in the office dictating business letters, but with a sweat-slippery scoop shovel in his hand, dizzily turning from coal-bin to fire-box and from fire-box to coal-bin.

"A slave's life!" you say. Well, just look at honest Owen. He has washed away the soot and sweat and changed the grimy overalls for clean, simple trousers and shirt. He was hungry enough to enjoy the supper that loving hands had prepared with a special view to "daddy's" likes, and now he is tired enough and heat-worn enough to derive the keenest pleasure from sitting on the little porch of the house his own labor has paid for, and looking into space with the dreamy air inherited from some long-ago, fairy godmother in that isle of dreams and fancies where he was born.

Mina and Nona, the twins, sit at his feet, bending their freckled faces over the tattered catechism. Thanks to the condition to which foreign domination had reduced the isle of saints and scholars, Owen Cashin had never learned to read himself, yet he insisted that every child of his should spend fifteen minutes nightly, ten months in the year, until the fourteenth birthday, in studying the catechism. Accord-

ing to the ordinary program this would have been vacation time, but Mina and Nona were to be confirmed in Father Timothy Casey's church on Lady Day, and the catechism lessons had to be continued in view of that event.

"Daddy," said Mina, "how do I make a General Confession?"

"Make your Confession, is it?" said Owen, the far away look still in his eyes. He was one of those sturdy little Irishmen of few words. "Ye know that well enough yourself. Ye tell yer sins to the priesht, then ye say the act of contrition — and *mane* it."

"Oh, daddy, I know — that's ordinary Confession."

"What other kind of Confession is there? The Lord God didn't make two kinds of Confession. One kind for everday laboring people and another kind for the gintry!" Straightforward Owen Cashin knew the doctrines of his faith as well as any man, but he had never grasped, or tried to grasp, the intricate difficulties into which Catholics plunge themselves by making bad Confessions; hence he had never given any thought to the need of General Confession or the manner of making it.

"I don't mean a different kind of Confession," protested Mina. "It's just the same kind only it's a General Confession — the kind I have to make when I have kept back sins in my last Confession."

"Tare an' ouns, child!" roared Owen, pulling the clay pipe from his lips, while the far away look vanished and he turned to the girl. "Have ye been keepin' back sins? Have ye been keepin' back sins?"

"No, no, daddy," cried Mina, "at least I didn't mean to. Maybe I forgot some; but I didn't mean to. But when *somebody* has been keeping back sins pur-

posely he has to make a General Confession to fix up those bad Confessions, otherwise he'll go to hell."

"Sarve him right," commented Owen,—"lyin' to God's ministher in the holy sacramint. God forbid that anny child of mine should be guilty o' the likes o' that!"

"Father Casey told us all to make a General Confession before Confirmation," persisted Mina, "Daddy, how would we do that?"

"Arrah begobs!" muttered Owen, who felt that all these new-fashioned practices were too complicated for his plain and simple theology. "Molly," he called to the eldest daughter who was chatting with a friend on the lawn. "Molly, come here and hear the catechism of these children. Shure, they're doing more talkin' than studyin' anyways."

Molly came on the instant. Prompt obedience was the only kind that was ever tolerated or thought of in Owen Cashin's home. The twins folded their demure little brown hands in their laps and prepared for the quiz.

"What is Confession?" asked Molly.

"Confession is a sacrament," rattled off Nona, "by which ——"

"Say Molly, do you know! Father Casey says we all have to make a General Confession before we are confirmed," interrupted Mina.

"No," corrected Nona, "he didn't say we have to. He said it would be a good thing and he would advise us to do it."

"That's correct," said Molly, "nobody has to make a General Confession unless he has kept back mortal sins on purpose."

"Oh, yes, he does too," said Mina. "Even if he

didn't keep them back on purpose, if he just forgot them, he has to make a General Confession."

"No, Mina, all you have to do then is to tell the sins you forgot. You don't have to repeat your past Confessions like you would have to do if they were bad."

"But, Molly," urged Mina, "Father Casey said it was just like the man buttoning his vest. Sometimes when he is in a hurry, he gets to the end, and he has one buttonhole left and no button to go into it. He has to go back and unfasten every button before he can get that last one to fit right. Father Casey says it's the same with your Confessions; you have to go over them all by means of a General Confession before you can make the last one right."

"Your getting things mixed up," said Molly. "Father Casey was talking about when you had kept back a sin on purpose, not when you had forgotten one."

"But there are other ways of making a bad Confession besides keeping back sins," said Mina. "Your Confessions are bad unless you are *sorry* for your sins and unless you have made up your mind not to commit them any more."

"Yes, I know," said Molly.

"Well, suppose you didn't leave out the sorrow on purpose — just forget it. Don't you have to make a General Confession?"

"N — no," replied Molly.

"Oh, yes, you do!" declared Nona.

"No, I don't think so," said Molly.

"Father Casey is over at Moynahans. I saw him going up the steps a little while ago. Let's go over and ask him."

"Maybe his Reverence doesn't want to be bothered with your questions this hot night," suggested Mrs. Cashin.

"Oh, mamma, it doesn't bother him to talk about catechism. He's always doing that!" and away they went.

Father Casey found the issue sufficiently confused to justify him in going back to the beginning.

"A General Confession," he said, "is a Confession where you repeat one or more of your past Confessions. For some, a General Confession is necessary; so long as they refuse to make it, all their Confessions will continue to be bad, and none of their sins can be forgiven. It is just like a man who buttons his vest in a hurry (the girls exchanged a knowing smile) and when he gets to the end finds that he has one buttonhole too many. He must go back and unbutton every button before he can get the last one to fit right. For others, a General Confession is not necessary but useful. They are advised to make one, but they are not obliged to do so. And for others again, a General Confession is neither necessary nor useful, but harmful.

"I shall begin with the last," continued the priest, "and work backwards. A General Confession is harmful to those who are scrupulous — those who are always imagining that there was something wrong with their past Confessions. They declare that if they could only make one more General Confession, their troubled conscience would find peace at last. This is a false idea. They will no sooner have finished this General Confession than they will think of a dozen sins which they will imagine they have omitted or failed to explain, and their second state will be worse than the first. Their only hope lies in strict obedience to the

confessor. Their duty is to try to quit thinking about the past and attend to the present.

"For others," he continued, "a General Confession is not necessary but useful. It is not necessary, because they have always tried to make good Confessions, and they have solid reasons for thinking that they have succeeded. It is useful, because it will give them greater confidence that their sins have been forgiven, and help them to go to meet their Judge without fear when the solemn hour of death comes. Besides this it will make them more humble when they reflect upon the long list of their sins and infidelities, and it will fill them with deeper contrition when they reflect upon how often they have offended their good and merciful God. It is good to make a General Confession of this kind when one is about to take some great, important step, as for instance, when one is about to be married, to be ordained to the Holy Priesthood, to enter the convent, or, like Nona and Mina here, to be confirmed.

"Lastly, he continued, "a General Confession is necessary for those who, for any reason, have made bad Confessions. You make a bad Confession if you conceal a mortal sin or some necessary circumstance connected with a mortal sin through your own fault. Secondly, you make a bad Confession if you confess mortal sins without true sorrow for them and a firm purpose not to commit them again. In this latter case it makes no difference whether it was through your own fault or not. Of course if it is your own fault, you are guilty of sacrilege, if it is not your own fault then you are not guilty of sacrilege, but nevertheless your Confession is bad and must be repeated because you confessed mortal sins without true sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment. Here let me add if you

confess only venial sins you must be sorry for at least one of them, otherwise this Confession too will be invalid. However, you will not be obliged to repeat it, because you were not obliged to confess these venial sins in the first place. But let me remind you that whenever you go to Confession and have only venial sins to confess, you should, in order to avoid the danger of making an invalid Confession, which is wrong, include some sin of your past life for which you are sure that you are sorry. For instance, you should say at the close of your Confession, 'I include the sins of my past life, especially those against charity and chastity.'"

"Father, Molly says that if you leave out some mortal sins without your own fault, you don't have to make a General Confession," said Mina.

"And I have just said the same thing," returned the priest. "Since you left out those mortal sins without any deliberate fault of your own, that Confession was good, and therefore there is no obligation of repeating it. All that you have to do is to mention the forgotten mortal sin in your next Confession, not in order to have it forgiven, for it was forgiven already in that good Confession wherein you forgot to mention it, but merely because Our Lord has commanded you to confess every mortal sin at least once."

"And Mina said," added Molly, "that if you have forgotten to be sorry you have to make a General Confession."

"Didn't I say that too just a moment ago," returned the priest. "Mina was right there."

"Father, please, how would you go about making a General Confession?"

"It is very simple," said Father Casey. "Say:

Father, I want to make a General Confession because I concealed a mortal sin, or, because I was not at all sorry for a mortal sin that I confessed in a Confession five years ago. I have gone to Confession and Holy Communion about once a month since then. Then tell, as well you can, all the mortal sins you have committed since your last good Confession five years ago together with the number and necessary circumstances. If you received any other sacrament during that time, as for example, Confirmation or Matrimony, you must tell that too, for you received these sacraments in mortal sin. It will sometimes make your General Confession easier if you divide your life into two or more periods. For instance, tell first the sins you committed while you were staying at home, then the sins committed after you had gone away to work; or first the sins committed before your marriage, and then the sins committed afterwards. The confessor will always be ready to help you to make a necessary General Confession, and you will be surprised to see how quickly and easily the work will be done with his assistance.

"Once you have made this General Confession carefully with honest sorrow you can be sure that all your sins are forgiven. Therefore do not examine the past any more nor examine to see whether you have told everything. If, without any examination whatsoever, you suddenly remember some mortal sin that you are sure you did not confess, tell it the next time you go to Confession. If you have any doubt as to whether you have told it or not, you need not, as a rule, confess it again, for it is very likely that you have confessed it, even though you do not remember having done so. In that long General Confession you might easily confess many sins and not remember afterwards whether

you have confessed them or not. Besides the confessor asked you questions and from your answers he understood many sins that you did not mention by name; he likewise understood the number as well perhaps as you could have given it yourself. Therefore, as I said, do not repeat anything from your General Confession unless you are sure, *without any examination,* that you did not confess it, for it is very likely that the confessor understood it sufficiently; furthermore, whether he understood it or not, it is surely forgiven; and lastly, God is satisfied with the effort you have already made to tell your sins exactly, He does not require anything further of you."

"Father, don't you think poor sinners who have been making bad Confessions for years must feel very happy after making a good General Confession?" asked Molly.

"My child, I have lived for quite a number of years, but I have never yet seen any happiness that could be compared to theirs. If you girls want to do a good work then say a little prayer every time you go to Holy Communion for the poor souls that are making bad Confessions. Ask our dear merciful Saviour to give them the grace and courage to make a General Confession and pass from the perpetual tortures of a guilty conscience to the sweet peace that comes from the friendship of God and His holy grace."

HOLY WATER AND A DEACONESS

A general alarm, sent out when Bobby O'Riordan drank the bluing, brought the priest, the doctor, and elderly Miss Phipps, the Methodist deaconess from across the way,— all ready to give "first aid." But Bobby's stomach had indignantly rejected the intruder, and they found him no worse for the experience. Father Casey, after lingering a few moments in the front room for the necessary social formalities, was about to take his leave, when Bobby's voice was heard in the bedroom, "Ma! Ma! you busted my collar button."

"Take one of Jimmy's; you'll find them in the holy water font," called out Mrs. O'Riordan without stirring from her rocker.

"Did you buy a holy water font to keep collar buttons in?" queried Father Casey.

"I got it at the last mission. They were so nice — with the statue of an angel on them," replied Mrs. O'Riordan evasively.

"You're a fine Catholic, Mrs. O'Riordan, not to have a drop of holy water in the house!"

"Look here, Your Reverence," she cried, running to the kitchen cupboard and triumphantly producing a quart bottle labeled "Old Rye Whisky" filled to the cork with holy water.

"There's no angel on that, however," laughed the priest. "You would show more respect for water blessed by the Church if you had at least a plain, un-

labeled bottle to keep it in. And it is still full to the top, which shows you don't use it much."

"I was saving it for a sick call," she said.

"You are right to take care to have some on hand for a sick call, but that is not the only use for holy water."

"And what else would I be doing with it, Your Reverence?"

"What else would you be doing with it?" cried Father Casey. "Don't you know that all well instructed Catholics keep holy water handy and bless themselves with it when passing from one room to another and when leaving or entering the house? At least, they bless themselves and sprinkle the bed with it before lying down to sleep. A devoted mother will sprinkle her little ones after she has tucked them away for the night and ask God and His holy angels to protect them. Good Catholics likewise sprinkle the house and its inmates with holy water during a storm. And in times of violent temptation they will use holy water to drive away the devil who is trying to lead them into sin. When the priest comes to visit a sick member of the family, to bring Holy Communion, or administer the Last Sacraments, they will put a little of the holy water in a clean tumbler or some other becoming receptacle together with a feather or a little piece of palm or something of the kind, which the priest can use as a sprinkler. If the sick person dies, they will place a vase and sprinkler of this kind in the wake room, so that all who come to pray beside the coffin can sprinkle a few drops of holy water over the corpse.

"Furthermore," continued Father Casey with malicious deliberation, for he saw that Miss Phipps, the Methodist deaconess, was itching for the fray. To be in such close association with the two greatest abomina-

tions of Popish superstition — a priest and holy water — and not to raise her voice in protest — it was unthinkable! "Furthermore, good Catholics will prepare a little holy water in this way when they invite the priest to bless their house, something they should never fail to do, or when, during one of his parochial visits, they ask him to bless a statue, a crucifix, or some other article of devotion —"

"Father," broke in Bridgie O'Riordan, "is a crucifix or medal blessed if I dip it into the holy water font at the door of the church?"

"No, my child, the only use to which you should put the holy water in that font is to bless yourself with it when you enter and leave the church."

Miss Phipps saw her chance.

"I have seen it put to other uses," she declared. "While touring Europe we caught sight of an old Italian woman washing her face in it. The poor benighted creature believed that it would cure her toothache."

"And have you any proofs that it did not? At least you will agree with me that the wash did her no harm."

"Indeed it did not; she needed it badly enough."

"However," continued Father Casey, "holy water is not blessed for that purpose. Neither is it blessed to be drunk or used as a liniment, as some poor people use it. It will probably do no good when used in any way in which it was not intended to be used."

"Neither will it do any good when it is sprinkled on the people in your idiotic ceremonies," announced the deaconess.

"Are you quite sure of that?" queried the priest. "You are a strong upholder of the Bible. Therefore

you must admit that there is such a person as the devil. You must admit, too, that the devil has the power of tempting us to sin, of afflicting us with various kinds of sickness, or stirring up storms and disturbances of nature against us."

"I have read of his doing such things in the Bible, but I fail to see what that has to do with holy water."

"You will admit that Christ has the power to drive away the devil, or to limit his activity, and that Christ has communicated this same power to His Church."

The deaconess found nothing to challenge in these statements.

"Now suppose that Christ's Church should promise to use her power of driving away the evil one in favor of everybody that would place a certain condition that she designated, is there any solid reason to believe that she could not or would not keep that promise?"

"Well — no —" faltered the deaconess, apprehensive that she was being drawn into some Jesuitical trap.

"Good!" cried Father Casey. "Now this is precisely what Christ's Church has done. She has promised to use the power given her by Christ Himself and, God willing, drive away the devil, who is tempting good people to sin or tormenting them with sickness, storms, or other calamities, on condition they sprinkle themselves or the places they are with water which she has commissioned her priests to bless for that purpose. Let me impose on your patience to listen to the prayer which the Church recites by the mouth of her priest, when she blesses holy water." Father Casey took from his pocket the Ritual, or Latin book which the priest uses when blessing articles of devotion or conferring sacraments. He continued, "Holy water con-

sists of salt and water blessed and mixed together. When blessing the salt, we must recite this prayer, 'Creature salt, I exorcise three by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God, by the God who commanded thee to be cast into the water by Eliseus, the prophet, that the unfruitfulness of the water might be cured; I exorcise thee, that thou mayest become exorcised salt unto the welfare of believers, that thou mayest be unto all that receive thee health of soul and body, that from every place wherein thou art strewed, may flee away and depart every phantasy and all wickedness or craft of diabolical fraud, and every unclean spirit, being adjured by Him who shall come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire. Amen.' After another prayer, the priest turns to the water and says: 'Creature water, I exorcise thee in the name of God, the Father Almighty, in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son Our Lord, and in the strength of the Holy Ghost, that thou mayest become exorcised water to put to flight all the power of the enemy and to root out and extirpate the enemy himself with all his apostate angels, by the power of the same Jesus Christ Our Lord, who shall come to judge the living and dead and the world by fire. Amen.' 'O God, who for the salvation of the human race, hast deigned to institute certain most sublime sacraments in the substance of water, graciously attend to our supplications, and infuse the power of thy benediction into this, the element of manifold purifications, that this thy creature may be enabled to drive out devils and expel diseases, that whatsoever, in the houses or lands of the faithful, has been sprinkled with this water, may be washed from all uncleanness and freed from harm: there, let no pestilential spirit abide, no disease-bearing air; and,

should there be aught that menaces the safety and peace of the inhabitants, may it take flight at the sprinkling of this water, that the healthfulness, obtained through the invocation of Thy name, may be defended against all attacks, through Christ Our Lord.' Then the priest thrice strews salt in the water in the form of a cross, saying: 'Let this commingling of salt and water likewise be done in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' After another prayer over the salt and water together, as beautiful and expressive as the prayers over the salt and water separately, which I have just translated, the blessing is finished. Thus holy water is made. From this you see that Christ's Church very clearly promises to make use of her power of driving away the devil for the benefit of all who devoutly use holy water. And you have already admitted that Christ's Church has received power to drive away the devil when this evil spirit plots harm to our soul or our body. Therefore the use of holy water is not a silly superstition, but one of the most sensible things a sensible person can do. In fact they are silly and presumptuous and foolhardy who reject this powerful assistance and attempt to fight the devil single handed. Thus when there is question of holy water, it is the Protestant who must prove that he is not silly rather than the Catholic."

"The Catholic Church is not the Church of Christ!" shrilled the deaconess.

"That, my dear Miss Phipps, is quite another question. You stated that the use of holy water is silly and superstitious in itself. I have proved that it is sensible and praiseworthy to use water blessed by the Church of Christ. If you will be so kind as gracefully to acknowledge that you were wrong, we shall proceed

to the second question: Which is the Church of Christ?"

"I admit that Christ's Church can drive away the evil one; but she would choose a more dignified way of doing it than the childish splashing of people with salty water."

"For instance?"

"By prayer to the Father of us all. There is no need of external signs and symbols; they lead to superstition."

"Perhaps you are right. However I should prefer to follow the judgment of the Church rather than yours. The Church, you know, is very, very old and experienced, while you are young —"

The old maid bit her lip.

"Are you ever distracted in your prayers?" queried Father Casey abruptly.

"I am, sir," she answered stiffly.

"So are we all. The Church knows this. Hence, in her motherly wisdom, she gives us external signs and symbols to help us to keep our flighty imagination from rambling away while we pray. In our struggles against the devil she gives us the symbol water. First of all, because it is plentiful and cheap, and therefore in reach of the poorest. Secondly, because water stands for cleanness and is opposed to the unclean spirit, who loves all that is vile and filthy. Thirdly, because water dropping upon the thirsty earth has always been called a blessing, hence it is most appropriate that the Church, when she blesses articles of devotion, should sprinkle them with holy water. Lastly, because the Jews, the chosen people, made use of the ceremony of sprinkling with water in all their religious ceremonies, and, I need not tell you, they did this be-

cause God expressly commanded them to do so, as you have read time and again in the ceremonial books of the Bible. What more natural than that the Church of Christ should have adopted into her liturgy this time-honored ceremony."

"Well, I don't care!" and with a little impatient flourish she whisked from her chair and adjusted her posy-bedecked headgear before the glass. Then, with a hatpin between her teeth: "I just *hate* holy water!"

"A certain well known gentleman, whose name is rarely mentioned in good society, hates it too. But that's nothing against holy water," said Father Casey.

A JUDGE NEEDS JURISDICTION

During a breathing spell in his work Father Casey had run down to the home town to pay one of his brief visits to his dear old mother, and by an unusual stroke of good luck, he had found Uncle Tim there too. I said, "by a stroke of good luck"; it would be more Christian and more in accordance with truth to say, "by a kind dispensation of Providence," "by a special answer to prayer," for Mrs. Casey had been praying for just such a quiet meeting between her son, Father Casey, and her brother, Mr. Timothy Corrigan, the steamboat engineer, who had not been to the sacraments for years.

Father Casey's task was an easy one, for the old man had strong faith, a good kind heart, and generous affection for his nephew and namesake. Mrs. Casey in the next room heard him say:

"Timothy, I'll go to Confession to *you*. Give me till morning, and then I'll be ready for you."

And she heard her son reply:

"Uncle Tim, I haven't faculties in this diocese, so you see I can't hear you myself, but I'll bring you down to the parish church when I go to say Mass in the morning, and the pastor will hear your Confession. You'll find him as good as gold."

The sailor agreed and went to his chamber to thumb the list of sins in a well-worn "Mission Book" until the wee sma' hours, while Father Casey entered the next room to bid his mother good night.

Mrs. Casey hastily wiped away a tear with a corner of her apron, but not hastily enough to keep her son from seeing that she had been weeping. At first sight he thought they were tears of joy over the return of her negligent brother, but the pained look on her kindly old face soon disabused him.

"Mother dear," he cried in alarm, throwing his arm around her, "what does this mean? What has happened? Why are you crying?"

She tried to pass it off as nothing and began to tell him how happy she was that uncle was going to Confession in the morning, but Father Casey would not be satisfied until she had made a clean breast of her troubles.

"Timothy, Timothy," she cried at last, bursting into tears afresh, "what have you done that you cannot hear Confessions like other priests? I thought my boy was so good and so learned that he could do more than any priest in the world, and just now I heard you tell your uncle that you can't hear Confessions in this diocese. Even the little assistant who was ordained less than a year ago can hear Confessions here — and you cannot! What have you done that you have been forbidden to perform your priestly work?"

"Oh, mother," he cried, greatly relieved, "may all your worries be as groundless as this one! It is true that I am not so good as you have thought me — not one-tenth so good. I am full of faults; but, by the help of God's grace, I have been guilty of nothing unworthy of my priestly dignity! My ecclesiastical superiors have ever declared themselves pleased with my conduct, and they never cease to show me extraordinary marks of esteem."

"Then why have they forbidden you to hear Con-

fessions? Tell me, Timothy," she pleaded, "and set my mind at ease."

"Why, mother, no one has forbidden me. I simply have no faculties to hear Confessions in this diocese. Since I do not live in this diocese I have no use for faculties here, and therefore I have never asked for them."

"But," she persisted, "you are a priest, and sure every priest can hear Confessions unless he's forbidden."

"On the contrary," replied her son, "no priest can hear Confessions unless he has obtained faculties to do so."

"Faculties? What do you mean by faculties?" There was a note of triumph in her voice. She knew now that her fears had been groundless, that her idol had been untouched. But she persisted in her questioning for the joy she felt in listening to her son.

"Ah, mother," he returned in a bantering tone, "by that question you have condemned yourself to listen to a catechetical instruction longer than any you ever gave me when I was a boy."

He settled himself on the footstool before her with his arm resting on her lap just as he had done so many a time for his catechism lesson in childhood. How much they resembled each other, those two! Though one was a man in the fulness of his strength and the other a woman old and gray and worn by labors and sorrows. It would have been hard to say which derived the keener enjoyment from these explanations of Catholic doctrine, he in giving them to her, or she in receiving them from him:

> "What dear delights can equal those
> That stir the spirit's inmost deeps,

When one that loves, but knows not, reaps,
A truth from one that loves and knows!"

"Order," Father Casey was saying, "is heaven's first law. To preserve order in an organization of any kind there must be regulations showing each individual his place and obliging him to keep it. If this is true of every organization it is especially true of the Church with its three hundred million members and more, distributed over the whole world. Order is secured in the Church principally by dividing the world into dioceses and parishes and placing a bishop or priest in charge of each. These bishops and priests are held responsible for the souls in their territory, and other bishops and priests are forbidden to intrude. If a bishop would wish to administer the sacrament of Confirmation or Holy Orders in the diocese of another bishop, he would be obliged to obtain permission. If a priest would wish to adminster the sacraments of Baptism or Extreme Unction in the parish of another priest, he would be obliged to obtain permission. Should they neglect to obtain the required permission they would commit a sin — the sin of usurping the right of another. However, the sacraments they administered would be valid. But the sacrament of Confession — here is the point I was driving at — the sacrament of Confession is different from all the other sacraments. If a priest or even a bishop would administer the sacrament of Confession outside of his own territory without authorization, or, if a priest who was not a pastor would administer the sacrament of Confession anywhere without authorization, that Confession would be, not only illicit, but actually null and void."

"Sure then, a priest is only a half priest until he is made a parish priest or a bishop. Do you know, Tim-

othy, I had always believed that a priest got the power to give us the sacraments when he was ordained, not when he was appointed to a parish."

"What you always believed, mother, is correct. A priest is a whole priest the moment he is ordained. It is in ordination that he receives the power to administer the sacraments. However, for the sake of good order he must get special authorization before he exercises this power. Should he presume to use this power without authorization, the other sacraments would be illicit but valid, while the sacrament of Confession would be not only illicit but invalid."

"Why would Confession be invalid more than any of the other sacraments?"

"On account of the very nature of the Sacrament of Confession," replied Father Casey. "Confession has the nature of a criminal trial. The penitent is both the criminal and the accusing witness. The priest is the judge. He must listen to the testimony and then pass sentence in the name of Christ whose place he holds. If he finds the penitent worthy, he will impose a punishment in the form of a penance and pronounce the sentence of pardon in the name of Christ; if he finds the penitent unworthy, he will suspend sentence until he receives proofs of worthiness. Now, Mother, you know that the judge of this county has the full powers of a judge, yet if he were to try and pass sentence upon a criminal who was not under his jurisdiction, his sentence would be set aside as null and void. In like manner, the priest in holy Ordination receives the full powers of judge of souls, but nevertheless if he attempts to use that power in regard to persons over whom he has no jurisdiction, his sentence will be set aside as null and void; in other words, if he hears Con-

fessions in any place where he has no faculties, these Confessions will be invalid. By virtue of their office, the Pope has jurisdiction over every Christian in the world, the Bishop over everybody in his diocese, the parish priest over everybody in his parish, and the religious superior over everybody in his monastery."

"And have other priests no jurisdiction?" asked his mother. "Can't they hear Confession at all?"

"Other priests have no jurisdiction of their own. They may get *delegated* jurisdiction. The Pope could give them jurisdiction of every place in the world, the bishop for every place in his diocese."

"Then why," queried Mrs. Casey, "don't all the priests get it from the Pope so they could hear Confessions wherever they go? If you had done that you wouldn't have to send your uncle to the parish priest for Confession. You could hear him yourself."

"Priests don't get delegated jurisdiction from the Pope for every place in the world for the simple reason that the Pope won't give it to them."

"How unfortunate!" exclaimed Mrs. Casey.

"Rather, how wise and prudent!" corrected her son. "There is nothing that shows better the deep personal interest the Church takes in the welfare of souls than her care in granting faculties for Confession. The hearing of Confession is, in a way, the most difficult and momentous work of the priest. When all priests hear Confessions well they constitute an immense power for good. Only a Divine Mind could have conceived such an efficacious means for directing our faltering, erring footsteps along the way that leads to heaven. But to hear Confessions well a priest must have learning; he must know the natural law, the divine positive law, and the laws made by God's Church,

whether for the whole world or for particular times and places. No one can know these laws in all their bearings unless he makes a continual study of them. To hear Confessions well a priest must have prudence: he must be able to see how all these laws apply to individuals with their infinitely diversified characters, in their infinitely diversified circumstances. To hear Confessions well the priest must, above all, have piety: only the truly pious priest will pray enough to obtain from God the charity and firmness and mercy and patience and self-sacrifice required for this God-like work.

"Now, mother, you can easily see that it could be impossible for the Pope to know whether all the priests have the necessary learning and prudence and piety. Therefore he does not, as a rule, give them faculties for Confession. He leaves this to each bishop in his own diocese. The bishop must carefully examine the fitness of each priest before giving him faculties. When a bishop appears before Jesus Christ as his judge, he will have to give a most strict account for every priest whom he has commissioned to hear Confessions in his diocese.

"The wisdom of the Church in leaving this matter to the bishop," continued Father Casey, "is further seen when we remember that a different degree of learning, prudence, and piety may be required in different places. A priest might be well able, for instance, to decide what is right and what is wrong in the conduct of upright, simple country people, but unable to do so in regard to the complicated commercial transactions of business men in a great city. Each bishop knows the circumstances of his own diocese. He is the best judge as to when a priest is fitted to hear

Confessions with profit within its limits. That is why a parish priest cannot validly hear Confessions outside of his own parish, and other priests cannot hear confessions at all, until both the one and the other has first asked and obtained faculties from the bishop."

"Father O'Brien, the parish priest of the next parish, often comes down to help our priest with Confessions. Must he write to the bishop for faculties each time?" asked Mrs. Casey.

"No, he need not ask each time, because it is customary for bishops, at least in this country, to give faculties for the whole diocese to the priests who are permanently working in the diocese. You know my parish is not in this diocese; that is why the bishop has not given me faculties here."

"The two Redemptorists that preached the holy mission here last fall did not live in the diocese," said Mrs. Casey. "They heard Confessions night and day. Do you suppose that they had to go to the bishop for faculties?"

"Undoubtedly they had. However, on an extraordinary occasion like that of a mission confessors have fuller faculties than those ordinarily given to the priests of the diocese. Therefore they can absolve even from reserved sins."

"What do you mean by reserved sins?"

"There are certain sins that are so bad in themselves or so dangerous to public morality that they must be rooted out at all costs. The bishop finds that some priests might absolve from these sins too easily, or without sufficiently impressing upon the mind of the penitent their heinousness. The bishop reserves the absolution of these sins to himself. That is, he says to his priests: 'I give you faculties for all sins ex-

cept those.' Thus for example, the atrocious crime of murdering unborn children is in many dioceses a sin reserved by the bishop."

"Can't the priest forgive people who have committed one of these reserved sins?"

"No, he must tell the penitent to go to the bishop. If the penitent finds it too hard to go to the bishop, then, with the penitent's permission, the priest himself may go to the bishop and ask for faculties to absolve in that single case. Then the penitent will have to come back a second time, listen to the admonitions that the bishop has ordered the priest to give and receive absolution.

"Besides, reserving certain sins," continued Father Casey, "the bishop may reserve certain persons. For example, he does not generally give faculties to all the priests of the diocese to hear the Confessions of sisters. He chooses certain priests who understand well how to direct those chosen souls and help them to attain the sanctity to which they are called, and appoints these priests to be the regular confessors of the sisters of the diocese. So you see, mother, thanks to the prudent watchfulness of Holy Mother Church, the priest's power of hearing Confessions is by no means so general as you had thought."

"Timothy," said his mother, abstractedly stroking his hair as had been her wont in bygone days, "whenever you spent the night here I always used to console myself with the thought: if I should die suddenly tonight my own son would be here to prepare me to meet my Judge. And — I hope it wasn't wrong — I used to wish sometimes that death would come to me suddenly while you were in the house. What a mistake I

made! You couldn't even hear my Confession, could you?"

"Mother, dear," he replied, drawing down her head and kissing her wrinkled forehead, "I hope that God will spare you to me for many a long year to come. But if it is a comfort for you to think that, were you to die while I was in the house, you would have me near to help you, you may still console yourself with this thought. Mother, I know that you love me. Oh, how many proofs you have given me of your love! But not even you can love your son as Holy Mother Church loves each one of her children. Here is an example of her love: When a Catholic is in danger of death, and no approved confessor is present, she, by a universal law, gives unlimited faculties to any priest, no matter who he may be, to hear the Confession of that dying person. Even though he were a fallen priest, an apostate from the faith, a bitter enemy of the Church, nevertheless she gives him faculties for the sake of her dying child. Thus she shows that nothing — not even her honor — will be allowed to stand in the way of giving to her children the consolation of the sacraments in the dread hour of death."

"My son," replied his mother, "the more I listen to your explanations of Catholic doctrine, the more I thank God for my holy faith."

"And the more I study and reflect upon Catholic doctrine, the more I thank God for the mother that took such pains to teach me my holy faith," said Father Casey.

BIDDY BRADY'S WATERLOO

Mrs. Mulcahy had run across the alley to old Biddy Brady's to "get the lind of a pan o' corn male," and incidentally to put a little spice into the insipid afternoon by means of some neighborhood gossip. To-day, the same as at any time during the past three years, the advent of a visitor was the signal for Biddy to begin "ballyragging" her daughter Mary, on account of that young lady's attachment to Lawrence O'Toole.

True, even Biddy's keen eye could detect no flaw in the manly character of "Larry," but the Bradys and the O'Tooles had been "on the outs" for two generations, and that was reason enough for denying him the hand of her daughter Mary. A finer girl never blessed herself at break of day than that same Mary. Brought up in the midst of squalid poverty, no ray of beauty or brightness had ever lighted up her surroundings save that which streamed from the doctrines and practices of her holy faith. Yet, under the influence of that divine light, her pure soul had unfolded and developed like a superb lily blooming in the mire.

"Look at the bades and books of her," said old Biddy, warming to the interminable theme, "pretendin' she's a saint, and she don't even keep the tin commandments. Don't the holy catechism tell you, 'Honor thy father and thy mother!' How often have I, her own mother, forbid her to speak to that blackguard of an O'Toole, and only last Sunday I saw

her listenin' to his blarney forninst the church. There's obejience for you!"

Poor Mary, it was her deep unshaken reverence for God's commandment, 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' that had kept her for three long years from the manly youth she loved, though all the while her heart was breaking from hope deferred.

"But, mammy," she pleaded, hurt to the quick by her mother's sharp tongue, and the big tears trickling down her cheeks, "whatever have you against Lawrence? He's a good, sober, industrious, Catholic boy."

"What have I agin him, is it? What have I agin him?" the old lady fairly shouted. "I'll tell you what I have agin him. I don't like the cut av his jib!"

"But, mammy, you know that's no reason; he can't help his looks."

"No reason you say! Why don't you call your poor old mother a fool and be done with it! Arrah, Mrs. Mulcahy, ain't I the unfortunate woman entirely, to have such a bould girl! What'll I do with her at all, at all?"

"I tell you, Biddy Brady," said the person addressed. "Let the two of you go to Father Casey with the whole story. It's he'll tell what's what to the one that's in the wrong."

"Well, thin, he'll be here anny day, for he's been taking the cinsus in Mulligan's plat a week come Friday. Glory be to God, there's himself this blessed minute! Mary, Mary, turn a pan over thim dirty dishes. Where's me clane apron? Oh, wirra, to think we'd have the house in such a state to receive the priest of God!"

"God save all here!" said Father Casey, dropping

quite naturally into that touching form of Irish salutation.

"God save you kindly, your reverence," they replied.

"Come, come!" he said. "Somebody has been crying. Mary, I'm surprised — a big girl like you — what's the matter?"

"Mammy is angry with me. She says I'm committing sin by not obeying her. And, father, we want you to tell us what to do."

"Whist, child," broke in Bridget, evidently not hankering after an authentic decision, "shure his Reverence has too many important matthers on his mind to be tantalized with our foolish little tales."

But Mary wouldn't "whisht." Her poor heart had suffered too long. The priest, the father of her soul, would point out the right way, and with God's help she would follow it.

"Father, please, does the fourth commandment oblige a girl to consult her parents about the man she is — to marry?"

"It does, as a rule," said Father Casey. "Her parents have had long years of experience in married life. They know its trials and its burdens. Therefore they are especially well qualified to advise her. If she were to make the irrevocable choice of a partner for life without consulting them it would, as a rule, be the same as if she said that she herself, despite her youth and inexperience, were a better judge of these matters than they. In fact, it would be the same as saying that they were stupid and incapable."

"Arrah, do you mind that now!" said Bridget.

"They have the duty of providing for their child and particularly of seeing that she is rightly settled in

her proper state in life. The girl who would stand in the way of their performing this sacred duty by following her own head and choosing her life partner without so much as consulting them would undoubtedly sin."

"Would she commit a mortal sin?" Mary was trembling and her voice scarcely rose above a whisper.

"Yes, child, for most parents would, with justice, feel deeply grieved at such conduct; and to do anything whereby another, especially one to whom we owe so much as a parent, is reasonably and deeply grieved, is a mortal sin."

"Glory be to God! Isn't it wonderful, the larnin' of our young priests! Shure the old Father Callahan (God rest his soul) could never give you such solid advice! He didn't get the schoolin' our priests get nowadays," murmured Bridget *sotto-voce* to Mrs. Mulcahy.

"Mark well," Father Casey pursued, "all I said is that the girl must *consult* her parents. If they object to the man of her choice, she must listen with docility to the reasons they advance, consider these reasons seriously before God, perhaps even take the advice of her confessor, and if, after all this, she is convinced that the reasons are not sufficient for rejecting the one she loves, then she is allowed to marry him in spite of her parents' opposition."

"Yerra wisha!" grunted Bridget.

"For it is the girl and not her parents," continued the priest, disregarding the interruption, "who must live with the man 'for better or for worse till death do them part,' and therefore her preference, and not theirs, must be considered in the matter."

"Would it be reason sufficient," asked Mrs. Mul-

cahy slyly, "if her parents didn't like the cut of his jib?"

"No; neither would it be reason sufficient if they objected to him simply because they had some unchristian quarrel with the family to which he belongs," said Father Casey, who knew more about the private affairs of his parishioners than they supposed. "In fact, there are cases where the girl could be so certain of meeting unreasonable opposition from her parents that she would not even be obliged to consult them on the matter."

"Yerra wisha!" from Biddy was the only response.

Father Casey noticed how Mrs. Mulcahy was silently gloating over her friend's discomfiture. But the good priest knew a thing or two about Mrs. Mulcahy, too. He knew, for instance, that her confirmed opposition was all that kept her own daughter Kathleen from entering the convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and he thought that, while he was on the subject, he might just as well as not say a word about that matter, too.

"When I said a moment ago," he observed, "that the fourth commandment obliges a girl, as a rule, and a boy, too for that matter, to consult her parents about the person he or she intends to marry, I did not mean that the same principle should be applied to one who wishes to enter the convent. A girl shows no disrespect towards her parents by not consulting them on this question, for her parents, who have chosen the marriage state for themselves, have had no experience about convent life, and therefore they are not competent to give counsel on the matter. Indeed, it is often wrong for a girl to consult her parents on this question, for parents are often blinded by inordinate affec-

tion for their child, or by false notions of convent life, and they are ready to play the devil's rôle and try to keep their child from following her evident vocation. Neither should a girl discuss the question of her vocation with her companions. The only person capable of giving her sane counsel on this matter is the confessor or pastor whom God has appointed to direct her in the important matter of her eternal salvation. If, after careful deliberation, he decides that she should become a sister, then it is her duty to obey him, the opposition of her parents to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Yes!" broke out Mrs. Mulcahy fiercely, "and leave her poor old father and mother without a bite to eat or a roof to cover them!"

"Mrs. Mulcahy, no pastor or confessor will ever tell a girl to enter the convent if her father or mother are really dependent upon her. Neither will any convent accept such a girl. And you know as well as I that most parents are not sincere in advancing this argument. If, instead of going to the convent, the girl wanted to marry some young fellow they liked, they would straightway forget how necessary she was for their support. Mrs. Mulcahy, I am thankful to God that I can say that I have sent dozens of young people to lead heroic lives in the convent or the monastery, and I have never yet seen a single case where the parents have suffered want because the child was faithful to its vocation. On the other hand, I have seen many cases where the opposition of parents frustrated an evident vocation, and little help or comfort did those parents ever get from their child afterwards. If we had a little more faith, we would know that when God calls a promising young man or young

woman to the religious life, He will find means of caring for those they leave behind them."

"But sure, your reverence, you would not have all the good girls, that would make dutiful mothers and bring up Christian families, go to the convent!"

"Precious little fear of it! As to which of the good girls should go and which should stay, that is for Almighty God to decide, and it ill becomes you or me to stand in His way. Woe to us if we attempt it! Though I live to be a hundred, I shall never forget the shriek of despair uttered by a dying woman in the sisters' hospital some years ago. The police had found her lying in a drunken stupor in the filthy attic where the divorced man whom she had tried to marry had abandoned her. They had her brought to the charity ward. We discovered that she had been raised a Catholic. Though no human aid could save her shattered body, we tried at least to rescue her immortal soul. I exhausted every argument in a vain attempt to induce her to go to Confession. Then came one of the sisters, a veritable angel of the sick room. She knelt beside that wreck of woman-hood, prayed, pleaded, implored."

"'Think of your Catholic mother,' she said; 'the mother that taught your baby lips to pronounce the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, think —'"

"'My mother!' shrieked the dying woman, almost springing from her bed. 'God's curse upon my mother!' Then touching the sister's veil: 'If it were not for my mother, I would have been wearing that —' and she fell back dead."

Father Casey rose and took his hat. On reaching the door he turned and said:

"As soon as mothers and daughters learn the law

of God and keep it, we will have fewer ruined lives and unhappy homes. God's law requires children to consult their parents upon their choice of a husband, but it forbids the parents to oppose this choice without solid and weighty reasons. On the other hand, God's law requires children to consult only their confessor and pastor on the question of entering the convent."

"His reverence can be powerful stern at times," observed Mrs. Mulcahy after Father Casey had gone.

"God forbid that we should say anything agin our grand young priests with their wonderful larnin', but good ould Father Callahan, (the Lord have mercy on his soul) shure he was the fine man, entirely," said Biddy.

THE HORRORS OF THE CONFESSIONAL

He was that product of the infuriated struggle between capital and labor — a Walking Delegate. He had "nosed" his way among the workmen in Father Casey's new church and had satisfied himself that none of these free-born Americans was earning his daily bread without the approval of the "Union." Feeling the need of relaxation after such strenuous mental application, he paused to look about and sneer at the instruments of "Popish mummery" that were being set up in the church.

"So that's where the black spiders spin their webs to catch the flies!" he said to the carpenter who was fitting the hinges on the new confessional. "If there's one thing more than another that shows what puppies and grovelling slaves the Catholic Church makes of men, it's this hellish confessional. I'd like to see the bishop or pope that ever lived that could force me to allow a priest to shut himself up in a little dark room like that with my wife or daughter!"

The carpenter merely smiled that tired smile with which a madhouse keeper acknowledges the pitable efforts of his charges to make a witticism. Not so a stocky hod carrier, who had deviated slightly from his chartered course when he saw the Walking Delegate examining the confessional. He dropped his hod with a bang and shook a plaster-begrimed fist under the speaker's nose.

"Swalley that lie, you dirty spalpeen, or, be jab-

ers, you'll swalley a dozen of them shinin' teeth of yours this blessed minute!"

"Hey, Jeremiah, here with that hod," bawled the plasterers as they leaned over the scaffolding to watch the fun.

"Cheese it, Jeremiah," expostulated the carpenter. "I hear the boss coming in the side door."

"The devil take the whole of ye," muttered Jeremiah. Then, collaring the Delegate who was quietly slipping away: "Will ye swalley that lie, I dunno?"

The side door opened, and in came, not the boss, but Father Casey. He had been inspecting the work and had heard everything.

"Hands off, Jeremiah." Jeremiah released his victim. "You sir," continued Father Casey sternly, turning to the Delegate, "call the confessional a dark room. Go inside and look at it. Go inside, I say!"

The Delegate having seen how promptly Jeremiah had obeyed the priest when told to keep hands off, knew that the hod carrier would obey with even greater alacrity if told to lay hands on, therefore he thought it best to do as he was bid.

"Is it a dark room, or is it three separate rooms?" demanded Father Casey.

"Three separate rooms," said the Delegate.

"You are in the room occupied by the priest. Is it possible for you to get through to either of the rooms occupied by the persons going to confession? Examine well before you answer."

"No, it is not possible," came the reply after a moment of violent pulling and tugging at the screens.

"And yet," said the priest, "you had the effrontery to say —"

"I only repeated what I heard said about Catholics."

"And you heard Catholics themselves deny it, had you not?"

"Yes, of course, I have heard Catholics deny it."

"And one look at a confessional would have sufficed to show that the Catholics were stating the truth while their accusers were lying. You come from the city, where there are two hundred and sixteen Catholic churches constantly open to the public. Why did you believe such a base calumny about millions of respectable fellow-citizens without at least a simple investigation? Your very office shows that you are ready enough to pry into other people's business. Why did you not pry into some confessional and see whether this vile story could be true, before believing it and helping to spread it?"

"I see, of course, that it was not true in the United States," said the Delegate, who resumed the offensive, now that a protecting group had gathered round. "But in the Catholic countries of Europe —"

"What do you know about Europe? A man that is so densely and incurably ignorant about conditions under his very nose need not try to tell us the conditions in Europe, a place he never saw. If you had ever been in a Catholic country, in Europe or anywhere else, you would know that they have only *open* confessionals, where the person going to confession can be seen by everybody in the church."

"I was not so badly mistaken in my statement as you are trying to make out, Mr. Priest. You are not in the same room with the person going to confession, but there is nothing in the way of a secret conversation with that person, and before I would let wife or child of mine be corrupted by the immoral talk of the priest —"

"The divil himself couldn't hould a candle to him for dom lies," broke in Jeremiah.

"Deny the fact who can [Business of making a dramatic gesture]. I have it from the lips of Br——, who had been for twenty years a Catholic priest."

"I suppose the apostate priest, to whom you refer, even claimed that he had to make a solemn oath or vow that he would live up to the duties of the Catholic priesthood before the bishop ordained him."

"He did and —"

"And this apostate, this perjurer, who had broken a solemn vow — this hypocrite, who, according to his own admission, posed as a zealous Catholic, while he no longer believed in the Catholic religion — this is your authority for making a vile charge against eighteen or twenty million clean-living Americans, who profess the Catholic faith. It is only a rotten heart that gulps down so greedily rotten stories about the neighbor."

"I know you priests are trained to argue till you can convince the people of anything. But you are beaten this time. Br—— took a book by St. Liguori, which all priests must study, and he translated the list of questions, that are asked in the confessional; and fouler, lewder talk could not be imagined."

"St. Liguori did write a book for priests. That is one true statement that you made since we began talking. It may have been a slip of the tongue, but it is true. But let me tell you right here that there is not a foul or lewd expression in its whole one thousand pages. No, sir, no more than there are foul or lewd expressions in the works which able and devoted physicians have written for the benefit of sick and suffering human kind. A book on medicine would have

a baneful effect on one for whom it was not written, but who turns to it seeking the satisfaction of morbid curiosity or food for a depraved imagination; but it is pure and harmless in the hands of a physician. So too, St. Liguori's book will sound ugly when tortured into coarse English by a shameless lecturer pandering to the passions of a lecherous mob. But for the priest who reads it in the chaste dress of the original Latin, it is an edifying commentary on the law of God, less likely to awaken immoral thoughts than the Holy Scriptures themselves. None save a perverted mind," continued Father Casey, warming up, " dreams that a reputable family physician speaks of all that he has read in his anatomical works to the innocent child that comes to him with a bruised finger or an earache. Neither can any save a perverted mind dream that the priest asks all the questions in St. Liguori's book of the innocent maiden that has nothing to confess but her little lapses against obedience and charity. But, just as the physician, from time to time, has to deal with loathsome and disgusting cases, so too has the priest — the physician of the soul. The law of Christ commands the sinner to confess his sins according to their number and species if he hopes to be forgiven. St. Liguori's instructions enable the priest to understand these sins at a word from a penitent, and thus to cut short all useless discussion of indelicate subjects in the confessional. Since Christ has commanded the sinner to confess all his sins, even those against the virtue of purity, it is the duty of Christ's minister, the priest, to listen to these sins. Nay, more, if he sees that the penitent is in danger of concealing any of these sins, and thus breaking Christ's law, and failing to obtain forgiveness of them, it is the priest's

duty to ask about any sins that he has solid reason to believe that this penitent has committed. Nor can his questioning be termed indelicate or improper, any more than the questioning of a physician who is called upon to cure a loathsome disease. St. Liguori's book enables him to ask these questions in the most brief and delicate manner possible. Let me say one thing more: I defy any man living to point out a class of young women one-half so pure, so modest, so firm in all that pertains to the angelic virtue, as the Catholic young women who are regular in approaching the sacrament of Confession. This one fact is an unanswerable refutation of the damnable lie that the priest uses the confessional to debauch his penitents."

"I don't wonder that the gentleman in black," sneered the Delegate, "grows eloquent. Touch the confessional, and you touch his purse."

"Whoever touches my purse will receive no severe shock," laughed Father Casey, "for it is generally empty. But you, sir, insinuate that people must pay the priest for Confession. Prove it."

"I've watched them with my own eyes. They never fail to carry their pocketbooks with them when they go into the confessional."

"They show good judgment," said Father Casey, "not to go into the confessional and leave their pocketbooks in the pew while you are on the watch. For it is safe to say that your conduct is no more honest than your conversation."

"You call yourself a Walking Delegate," said a big broad-shouldered plumber, sidling up to the man addressed. "Therefore, *Walk!*"

There was a ring of determination in the voice that the Delegate did not mistake. He took the hint.

"Arrah, Yer Reverence, why did ye stand forninst me? I'd a learnt the spalpeen to hould his lyin' tongue."

"A blow is bad logic, Jeremiah. But I am half inclined to believe that it's the only argument that will take any effect on such a hardheaded bigot."

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

A little picture of red and blue and gold slipped from Father Casey's breviary and fluttered to the grass. Then came the struggle. For he was spending the day at the home of his sister, Mrs. Kelly, and the little nephews, who hovered around him while he recited his office, each fought with might and main for the honor of recovering the picture and restoring it. Terence, the oldest, was victor. Still breathless from the strenuous work, he said politely:

"Pardon me, Uncle Tim, you dropped your picture."

"Thank you, Terence, thank you. You may keep it."

Father Casey, try as he might, could do nothing more than pretend to read his breviary as the other children gathered around Terence to discuss his gift.

"What is it? What is it?" came in chorus.

"The Blessed Virgin holding the Infant Jesus in her arms," said Terence with dignity, "and it says: 'Miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help."

"Let me tee," whined the supreme ruler and dictator of the house of Kelly, baby Mary.

"It's God's mamma. Kiss God's mamma, Mary," said Catherine, lifting up the little one who fervently kissed the picture. Baby Mary gazed at the sorrowful face of the Madonna a moment and murmured:

"Dod's mamma mad at me!"

"No, Mary, she isn't mad at you. She loves you.

She looks that way because she is feeling bad about something. Kiss her again, Mary, and make her glad." And while, her baby eyes full of love and tenderness, the little one kissed the picture, Father Casey thought he understood better than ever before two truths which he had so often preached, namely, that faith takes deepest root in the heart of those that have been surrounded by a Catholic *atmosphere* in the home and in the school from earliest childhood, and that Holy Church succeeds better by her symbols and her ceremonies in making her children understand the deep mysteries of salvation than any human words could ever do.

"Why Dod's mamma feel bad?" persisted Mary.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Catherine.

"I know," cried Terence; "it's because the Little Jesus broke His shoe lace. See His Shoe is falling off."

"No," objected Larry, "it's because there's an angel on each side shaking a stick at Him. He's scared; look at the way He's holding His Mother's hand. Catherine, what are the angels shaking sticks at Him for? Read what it says there on the picture."

"I can't read it. The letters are made so funny," said the girl after a vain attempt to decipher them.

Father Casey decided that he would postpone his breviary for some more propitious time and turned to the children.

"I will tell you why you cannot read them, Catherine," he said. "They're Greek, and you haven't learned Greek yet. The four highest letters stand for the words 'Mother of God.' The letters over the angel on the right stand for the words 'Archangel

Gabriel,' and over the angel on the left, for 'Archangel Michael.' The letters over the Infant's head stand for the words, 'Jesus Christ.' Catherine was right in saying that the Mother of God is feeling bad. In fact, the picture used to be called, 'The Sorrowful One;' now it is called 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help.' She is feeling bad because she is thinking of the bitter passion Her Divine Son will one day be obliged to suffer on account of our sins. The angels are holding, not sticks, but the instruments of the Saviour's passion, the Lance, the Reed and the Sponge, the Cross and the Nails. The Divine Child was perhaps playing on the floor when the angels appeared to Him and showed Him the instruments that would one day cause Him such bitter torments. In His fright He runs to His Mother for help and clings piteously to Her hand, still gazing at the terrifying vision. One of His sandals became loosened as He ran. His Mother can do nothing but look at us in sorrow and reproach as if to say: 'How can you make my dear Child suffer so?' The story of this picture is most interesting and wonderful. Would you children like to hear it?"

"Yes, yes, please, Uncle Tim!" came the answer in chorus.

"The Redemptorist Fathers," continued the priest, "are celebrating this year the Golden Jubilee of the recovery and restoration to public veneration of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and they have asked me to preach one of the jubilee sermons in their big church in the city. That is how I know the story so well. I have read all I could find about it in order that I might write my sermon."

"What do you write your sermons for, Uncle Tim? So that you can send them to the newspaper?" queried Catherine.

"No, child, I write them so that I'll know what I am going to talk about. But now for the story: Terence's picture there is a copy of the miraculous picture of our Lady of Perpetual Help venerated in the Redemptorist Church of San Alfonso in Rome. The miraculous image was painted on wood in red, blue, and gold, over six hundred years ago. The painter must have been a native of Greece for the style of the picture is Greek or Byzantine. Some claim that it is a development of the picture of the Blessed Virgin said to have been painted by the Evangelist, St. Luke, who wrote so much about her and who knew her so well. At any rate the picture was venerated for a long time in the island of Crete, or Candia, not very far from Salonika, which you have heard your papa talking about since the war broke out. About four hundred years ago the Turks invaded the island with a great army. They burned the churches and made fun of and destroyed the holy pictures they found there. In order to preserve from profanation the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a pious merchant of Crete took it with him to a ship and sailed for Italy."

"Wasn't he afraid of submarines?" interrupted Terence.

"There were no such things, my boy. In those days men were hardly able to build ships that could sail on the water, let alone under it. In fact a bad storm blew up while they were midway on their journey. Such a storm would hardly make the passengers on one of our present day ocean liners miss a meal,

but it was too much for that poor old boat. Just as the sailors had given up in despair, saying that everybody would surely go to the bottom, the merchant brought the picture on board and ordered all to kneel down and pray to the Mother of God in heaven for help. They had no sooner obeyed him than the storm stopped all of a sudden, and they were saved. A few days later they arrived at Ostia, which is at the mouth of the Tiber, the river that flows through Rome."

"Oh, I know," cried Catherine; "Ostia is the city where St. Augustine and his mother, St. Monica, sat out on the porch and looked at the stars and talked about heaven. They were so happy because he had become a good Catholic after his mother had prayed for him for thirty years."

"That is true. I am glad to see you take an interest in facts of this kind. Unfortunately the ancient city of Ostia has been buried for centuries under the drifting sands. Well, our merchant disembarked at Ostia and hastened up the river to Rome. It seems that the bringing of the precious picture to the Eternal City was destined by God to be the crowning work of a well spent life, for he took sick and died, not however before he had exacted of the man in whose house he died a solemn promise to have the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help set up for public veneration in one of the churches of Rome. The wife of this man conceived a strange fascination for the picture and finally induced him to break his promise and keep the picture. Three different times the Blessed Virgin appeared to the unhappy man in a dream to remind him of his obligation. Struck with fear, he told the dream to his wife, but she only laughed at him and told him that he was the victim of an overwrought

imagination. A fourth time Our Blessed Lady appeared to him and said in a tone of great severity: 'I have now warned thee three times but in vain — I see there is no other means of leaving thy house than that thou be first carried out of it.' Very soon afterwards the man died.

"The husband's death did not succeed in overcoming the obstinacy of her heart," continued Father Casey, "but a new warning was at hand. One day her daughter, a little girl, came running to her saying: 'Mother, I have just seen in our house, oh, such a beautiful lady, who said to me, "Go tell your mother and your grandfather that the Mother of Perpetual Help wishes her picture to be set up for public veneration in one of the churches of Rome.'" (Thus it was that the Blessed Virgin chose for herself the sweet name of Mother of Perpetual Help.) The widow, deeply moved, was about to comply. But a wicked woman of the neighborhood, hearing of her determination, violently opposed the plan and at the same time insulted and blasphemed Our Blessed Lady. Instant retribution followed. She was stricken down with mortal illness, but repentant and confessing her crime, was permitted to touch the picture, when she was instantly cured. This evident miracle conquered the widow's obstinacy. But now, the question presented itself: To which of the three hundred churches of Rome should the picture be given? Our blessed Lady graciously deigned to answer this question by appearing a second time to the child and saying to her: 'I desire to have my home between my beloved church of St. Mary Major and that of my dear adopted son, John.' Between these two basilicas stood the church of St. Matthew, at that time in charge of the religious

of the Augustinian Order. To the superior of these religious the picture was given.

"In 1808 Napoleon's general, Miollis, laid siege to Rome. The church of St. Matthew stood in the way of his batteries. It was levelled to the ground. The Augustinian Fathers took refuge in the church of Santa Maria in Posterula (St. Mary of the Bypath) carrying with them the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. But fearing sacrilegious profanation, they no longer exposed it for public veneration. One by one, the older members of the community, who had known the church of St. Matthew in happier days, passed away. Only the aged Brother Orsette remained. One day he called a Mass server, Michael Marchi, and pointing to the Madonna of Perpetual Help on the wall of the oratory, said impressively: 'This picture was formerly held in great veneration in the church of St. Matthew, and every year a feast was celebrated in its honor.' On another occasion he said: 'You understand, Michael, that the Madonna, so long venerated in St. Matthew's, is the one you see here in the chapel. Mind, don't forget it. I tell you, Michael, this is certain. Do you hear me? Do you understand what I say? Oh, how many miracles this picture has wrought! Oh, it was indeed miraculous!'

"Not long after the death of Brother Orsette (1853)," continued Father Casey, "Pope Pius IX ordered the Superior General of the Redemptorists to transfer the central house of the order from Naples to Rome; hence the Redemptorists in June, 1854, purchased, on the Esquiline hill, the Villa Caserta, an old Roman palace, in the garden of which was still visible the ruins of the church of St. Matthew. The house

was transformed into a monastery and a new church was built nearby, dedicated to St. Alphonsus Liguori. One of the fathers of Villa Caserta, searching one day among some old books and manuscripts, discovered certain valuable documents relating to the ruined church of St. Matthew, and in particular to a picture of Our Lady, famous for its many miracles. When he gave an account of what he had found out, one of the Fathers suddenly exclaimed: 'I know where this miraculous Madonna is. I have seen it myself many a time in the chapel of the Augustinians of Santa Maria in Posterula.' The Father who thus spoke was none other than the one-time Mass server, Michael Marchi, who had since become a Redemptorist. The Very Rev. Father Mauron succeeded in obtaining the picture from the Augustinians, and, on January 19th, 1866, after a banishment of sixty years, Our Lady of Perpetual Help was again brought back to a sanctuary between St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. This restoration to public veneration of the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help happened just fifty years ago. This is why the Redemptorists throughout the world have asked the Pope for permission to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of this event with special services in all their churches. Lovers of the Blessed Virgin have good reason to take part in this jubilee for many miracles have proved how well she is pleased when we honor this picture. The walls of the Redemptorist church in Rome, where the picture is enthroned, are lined with little silver hearts — the thankofferings of people who have been cured or who have received other miraculous favors through the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Exact copies of the original have been made by the thous-

ands and touched to the miraculous picture and then set up in churches throughout the world or distributed to the people. Miracles upon miracles have been worked by means of these pictures. Just to give you one example: The basement of the Redemptorist church in Boston was almost filled with the crutches, braces, and so forth, left there by people who have been miraculously cured by making a novena in honor of the picture set up in that church. Everywhere in the world you will find people who love the Blessed Virgin kneeling before this picture and praying for help for body and soul."

"Uncle Tim, if I was sick would this picture make me well?"

"If the Blessed Virgin would pray and it was good for your soul, *God* would make you well. And the Blessed Virgin so loves this picture, which reminds us of her sorrows and the sufferings of her Son, that she surely will pray for you if you honor it."

"Uncle Tim, Uncle Tim!" This time it was Baby Mary that spoke.

The priest looked kindly upon the tiny bit of humanity that had clambered to his knee, and thought to himself rather proudly: Unquestionably I possess the extraordinary skill of a story teller. Not many men could arouse the interest of this mere infant in a historical narrative as I have done.

"What is it, Mary? What did you want to know?" he asked the child.

"Uncle Tim, why don't you wear a necktie like my papa?" said Baby Mary.

The official prayer of the Church in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is the following:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast given us thy own Blessed Mother, whose miraculous image we venerate, to be our Mother of Perpetual Help, graciously vouchsafe, that we, who continually call upon her motherly help, may ever experience within us the fruits of Thy redemption. Amen.

A HINT TO PARENTS

It was a thoroughly tired priest that sat toasting his slippered feet at the logwood fire that Christmas night. He had spent Christmas Day and the day and night before it, and many days and the greater part of many nights before that, in hard, trying work that his people might be assured of true Christmas joys. His work, it seemed, had not been in vain. The Church and altar had been a triumph of the decorator's art; the choir had never sung so sweetly; the Communion railing had been thronged, the Confessions numerous, with more than one callous old sinner sneaking back to the fold; the sermon, he honestly believed, had been worth listening to; and the servers had been faultless — even the roughest lad from Hooligan's flats had, for once in his young eventful life, looked and acted like an angel.

They had come — his dear people — to receive in full measure and overflowing the spiritual treasures of which he was the dispenser, and now they had returned to their homes to enjoy the more material good things of Christmas, and had left him alone. Was he lonely? Well, he was human, and the human heart naturally craves for the joys of home on an occasion like this — the joys of home, which the priest must sacrifice that he may be the father of his flock. Yes, he was lonely,— lonely, but happy and peaceful and at his ease, anticipating a long pleasant evening with his books.

Br-r-r-r! ! !

"Hello — Yes, this is Father Casey — A sick call? Veronica Grey? No, he didn't know them — Newcomers in the parish — She is just five years old? — Yes, he'll go at once."

He hung up the receiver with a sigh of impatience and immediately thereafter scolded himself for his want of self-sacrifice.

"What is your little discomfort, Father Casey," he said to himself, "compared with the sorrow of the home darkened by the shadow of death this blessed Christmas night?"

"Fourteen hundred and thirty Market Street, over the harness shop. Here it is."

He kicked the soft snow from his shoes and climbed the rickety stair. The door opened quickly.

"Praised be Jesus Christ!" said a subdued voice, and he saw a woman kneeling reverently before him; he saw too a box on which was a clean white cloth, two lighted candles, and a crucifix, and in the corner of the bare room a child lying in a little bed.

"Don't kneel, my good woman, I did not bring the Blessed Sacrament. I thought — you said — it was a child only five years old."

The woman rose. He believed he saw a look of disappointment on her face.

"Is she very sick?" he whispered.

"Yes, Father," replied the woman aloud. [Evidently she had no fear of frightening the little sufferer.] "The doctor was here a few minutes ago. He said she could not last through the night. Veronica, here is the priest."

The child tried to speak. A violent fit of coughing seized her and shook her baby form so cruelly and so long that the priest had to turn away his eyes in pity.

When the spell was over he knelt down beside her, and then he saw that the tears were streaming down her wasted cheeks.

"My poor little Veronica, it hurts, doesn't it?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, Fa-ther, I — don't — mind — that," she murmured with an effort, but her speech was remarkably correct for one so young. "It hurt Jesus more when the bad men hammered the nails in His hands and feet." He noticed that her fingers clutched convulsively a worn brass crucifix, "but, Fa-ther, I thought — I thought —" Once more she burst into tears, and once more the racking cough seized her.

"What is it? Tell me, Veronica," pleaded Father Casey, struck with the sense of his own helplessness before the anguish of this patient little sufferer.

"Fa-ther, mamma said that — that you would bring me Jesus. But — but — you didn't. It's — His — birthday."

Father Casey, surprised to see such faith in the Blessed Sacrament in one so young, was about to tell her that he would bring her Communion at once, but he decided to examine her a little more to make sure that she understood.

"Veronica," he asked, "when you were in church did you ever see the priest come down with a gold cup — a chalice — in his hand and give something round and white to the persons kneeling at the altar railing and holding the white cloth under their chin?"

"Yes, Fa-ther," she murmured.

"What was it that the priest gave them? Was it a little piece of bread?"

Her eyes opened wide with wonder that he should ask such a question.

"No, Fa-ther; it was Jesus."

"Why did Jesus come to them?"

"To make them good," she answered simply. "Mamma couldn't go to get Jesus, to-day because I was so sick.— And it's His birthday."

"Do you want me to bring you Jesus now so that He will come into your heart and make you good?"

"Oh yes, Fa-ther, please. Mamma said that I would not be let go to Communion till I was seven,— unless I got very, very sick;— then the priest might bring me Jesus. And — and I told Jesus that I would like to be very, very sick to-day so that He would come to me on His birthday."

Father Casey saw how little need there was of further examination. What a blessing of God it would be, he thought, if all grown people understood and believed the great truth of the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as well as this child of five years.

Mrs. Grey wrapped a tattered shawl about her shivering shoulders and went to the foot of the stair while Veronica confessed her little faults with expressions of sorrow that humbled and edified the good priest. The Confession finished, he called Mrs. Grey back to the bedside of her dying child and hurried to the church to bring the Blessed Sacrament. Returning a half hour later, through deepening snow, tenderly pressing to his breast his Sacred Burden, Father Casey was more than once rudely disturbed in his communings with his Sacramental Lord. He had the greatest difficulty in freeing himself from the importunities of a vagrant asking for a dime "to pay for a night's lodging"; he was wellnigh elbowed off the pavement by a plutocrat in furs making his uncertain

way from his limousine to the club entrance. A social gulf separated these two men, the tramp and the millionaire, and yet they were exactly alike in their beastly craving for drink; they were exactly alike in that they celebrated Christmas by outraging Jesus Christ who was born into the world on that day for love of us. A few surreptitious snowballs were aimed at him from a group of street boys; and the coarse, mirthless laughter of the young girls from a party of passing joy-riders grated on his ears.

"Dearest Jesus," he murmured, pressing closer to his heart the Sacred Host, "how much this is like the first Christmas when You came unto Your own and Your own received You not! Nineteen hundred years have gone by — nineteen hundred years crowded with proofs of Your love for men — and You are passing through their streets to-night neglected and ignored as You were in the stable of Bethlehem on that first Christmas night. Here at least, in this cold and poverty-stricken attic, You will find loving hearts ready to welcome You."

He knocked the soft snow from his feet and ascended the rickety stairs for the second time that night. Strange to say, this time his pity went out, not to the half-starved mother and her dying child, but to those whom he had passed on the way. He pitied them because they were madly seeking happiness away from God, the only source and giver of happiness, and therefore they were doomed to find, not happiness, but disappointment and bitter remorse.

As he walked across the room to the box with the crucifix and lighted candles, he repeated the ritual prayer prescribed on entering a house to administer the Blessed Sacrament:

"Pax huic domui et omnibus habitantibus in ea.—Peace to this house and all that dwell therein."

How singularly fitting were the words for this Christmas sick call! How like an echo of the hymn the angels sang when Jesus first entered this valley of tears: "In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.—Peace on earth to men of good will."

The hearts of this mother and her dying child were hearts of good will, and oh! how the new-born Saviour was filling them to overflowing with His heavenly peace!

Father Casey placed the Blessed Sacrament on the box and knelt in adoration. It was his wont to repeat the acts of faith, love, and adoration aloud in order to help the sick person and the bystanders to realize that Jesus Christ, the great God of heaven and earth, had entered their house and was there before them, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity under the lowly appearance of bread.

"My Jesus," he began, "I firmly believe that Thou art here. I love Thee, Jesus," he paused a moment — immediately behind him the words were repeated slowly and clearly:

"My Jesus, I firmly believe that Thou art here. I love Thee, Jesus."

The child had evidently gotten out of bed to receive Holy Communion. He turned to order her back and to reprove her for such an imprudent action. He saw her — that child of five — in her little white gown, kneeling in the center of the room. Her eyes, fixed on the Sacred Host, were sparkling like two diamonds; her cheeks were flaming red from fever and still more from the fervor of divine love. Her lips

were parted, her hands outstretched in an unconscious gesture of eager longing. The priest turned again toward the Blessed Sacrament and bowed his head in silence. He felt that it would be almost a sacrilege to try, by means of poor human words, to suggest acts of faith and love to this innocent soul to whom God Himself was speaking.

When the Confiteor was finished he rose:

"Misereatur tui . . . May the Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. Indulgentiam, absolutionem . . . May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins."

Then he turned towards her holding in his hand the Consecrated Host wherein, by an incomprehensible mystery of love, the Son of God hides Himself in order to come to us, to be our food in life, and at the hour of our death, our Viaticum — our provision for the journey from time to eternity.

"Ecce Agnus Dei," he said. "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world. Domine non sum dignus."

She bowed her head and struck her breast:

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but say only the word and my soul shall be healed."

The priest took a step forward. She raised her face, radiant as that of an angel.

"Accipe, soror," he said. "Receive, my sister, the Viaticum of our Lord Jesus Christ which will protect you from the wicked enemy and lead you unto life everlasting." And the dying girl received her first Holy Communion; she received her God into her

heart for the first time on His Own birthday; she received the only Christmas gift for which she longed, the gift which contains all gifts.

A tremor passed over her body. She would have sunk to the floor had not her mother caught her and lifted her gently and reverently into bed. She lay there motionless with closed eyes and folded hands. She seemed hardly to breathe. Her mother and the priest knelt beside her bed and silently prayed — prayed to the Virgin's Son who had found a fitting place of repose in the lily-pure heart of this child, Slowly the hectic flush faded from her cheeks and gave place to an almost transparent whiteness; she opened her eyes,— they were growing glassy,— sought for her mother's face, and murmured:

"Mamma,— you — won't — be very lonesome — will you? He wants — me — to — go. It's — His — birthday."

The priest and woman exchanged glances. Both understood. There was no time to lose. He hurriedly administered Extreme Unction and gave the Last Blessing.

"Veronica," he said slowly, hoping that she could still hear and understand. "Veronica, I am going to give you the Papal Indulgence, the blessing for the hour of death. You want this blessing, don't you, so that all your sins will be taken away entirely, and you won't even have to go to Purgatory? To get this blessing you must call on the name of Jesus. Say these words after me, Veronica: My Jesus, mercy." He paused. After a moment her lips moved feebly.

"My Jesus, mercy," they heard her say. "My Jesus, m —"

A gasp, a slight shudder, and then — Peace! She

had accepted the invitation of Jesus to go with Him. — It was His birthday.

The widowed mother, thus deprived of her only child and companion on Christmas night, found relief for her bursting heart in speaking of the little one and of the few years they had spent together in poverty and privation, but in the greatest earthly happiness.

Her husband had been killed before the baby was born. Under the crushing weight of this heavy cross her holy faith had been her only support and consolation. In her love for her child, she had tried to fill it with that same strong living faith that had meant so much to her in her hour of need. Long before the child had neared the use of reason, she spoke to it of God, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels and saints. As often as Christmas and Epiphany and Good Friday and Easter and Ascension Day and Assumption Day and all the other feasts came round she repeated the beautiful events they commemorate. Many a summer night she sat outside with her child on her knees pointing up to the heavens and telling it of the beautiful home that was awaiting them beyond the stars. She always carried the child to church, and when the Sacred Host was exposed during the Benediction or lifted up at the Consecration, she never failed to tell the little one, in the wonderfully significant language suggested by mother love, that that was God and why He was there. Whenever she received Holy Communion, she spoke of it to the little one for days before, and as soon as she returned from the altar rail, she pressed baby Veronica to her breast and said: "God is here. Jesus is here. The priest gave me Jesus when I went up to the altar rail, and now I am so happy! Some day Jesus will

come to you too, Veronica. That will be your First Communion. Jesus is wishing and wishing that the day of your First Communion would come because He loves you and wants to come into your heart. Oh, Veronica, my child, always keep your heart good and pure so that Jesus will always be glad to come into it. Learn your prayers and your catechism well so that the priest will let you make your First Communion very soon."

For more than an hour Father Casey listened to the mother telling little homely incidents from the intimate life of herself and her dead child. As he trudged back to the rectory, after sending the St. Vincent de Paul men to attend to the wake and the funeral, he looked at the brightly lighted windows that lined the street and soliloquized:

"I wonder how often the mothers in those grand houses have ever said a word to their little ones about God or the truths of our holy faith! They may talk to them of toys and games, foster their vanity in dress, their sensuality in eating and drinking, their irascibility in quarrelling, but, though the little ones have already made great strides in the knowledge and practice of sin, these carnal-minded parents will say: They're too young yet; it would be useless to try to teach them anything about religion. I thought at first that, for a child of five to know and love the truths of faith as well as little Veronica Grey, it would require nothing short of a miracle. Now I see that it requires only a Christian mother's love."

THE END

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